

**Lulav:** In our first couple episodes, we did our short summaries on the fly, just flipping through our bibles page-by-page. Eventually we dialed back on that frantic energy and added more wordplay via prepared summaries -- see if you can hear the difference. We start our Torah reading in the beginning, with parashat Bereishit.

**Jaz:** So, it's the beginning of everything and G-d creates heavens and the earths and the water and land and land and fruit and trees and then people and then there is a second creation story right after that where there are people and they are in a garden and uh, a man is created first and then a woman and there's some questions about that, but then they are in a garden and they eat fruit that they're not supposed to because a snake tells them to and they listen and then they get thrown out of the garden and then they have to work forever and uh, will now die, but they also know things which is great. And then they have kids and the kids fight each other and one of them dies and then the remaining brother is left to —

**Lulav:** [One day, nothing flinched, and there the world was](#). Waters from waters, dark from light, crawlers from swimmers - we get a bunch of divisions, which explain the messy rainbow of phenomena in our world. Or maybe there's another story: of a specific man made from earth and breath to work a specific land; of this man naming the world's living things and finding no true companion; of one being crafted for him. The two learn a division by osmosis: good from bad. Because of this, they may have neither haven nor ease of life. The world's first fratricide occurs because, I mean, have you ever TRIED to keep kids from hitting each other with rocks when they're mildly disappointed? (*Jaz snickers*) We wrap this barn burner of a parsha up with a whole bunch of numbers, plus also it's Big Boy Season, plus also Hashem has depression. *[timer goes off]*

**Jaz:** Parashat Noach.

**Lulav:** The — so, the Lord is like, whoo, time to blot out the earth because it's bad actually and then He's like, hey Noah, here's some instructions for building an ark. Noah does that, G-d does that, and then things start to dry up and then they re-do kind of a covenant thing, and then it's like, hey, the ground is dry, go be fruitful and multiply. There's some animal sacrifice. Um, prohibitions of murder — (*loud alarm sound*) and nudity.

**Jaz:** Story of Noah, including animals, world drowning, a bunch of merisms, promise to never again do the world-drowning thing, some creepy stuff with Noah's children and bonus genealogy.

**Lulav:** Parashat Lech Lecha.

**Jaz:** Uh, so, Abram and Sarah set out from the land that they're living in and go somewhere else to Israel, and then there's a famine and they go to Egypt and then Abram pretends that Sarai is his sister and she gets married to the Pharaoh and the Pharaoh's like, "why didn't you tell me that she was actually your wife?" And then gets mad at Abram and then they leave. And then they have lots of money and then they go back and then he splits the area with his nephew

Lot and then (*alarm sound*) Yeah.

**Lulav:** Some divinely inspired nobody and his sister — wait. Wife? Have a run in with Pharaoh and his brother moves to S'dom. When said brother is captured by a big ol' military alliance, Abram marches with his neighbors in retainers to get him back- and does! Abram has a mid-, or frankly late-life crisis, but is reassured by his household god that there will be babies. He cuts a covenant and then gets some pretty explicit spoilers for the next four books. There's some really bad polyamory, resulting in a son whose stepmother is not fond of him. Lastly, Abram cuts another covenant, if you know what I mean, (*Jaz groans*) and gets another syllable for the trouble. (*Jaz groans*)

**Jaz:** Parashat Vayeira.

**Lulav:** Three divine strangers show up and party with Abraham while Sarah giggles in the background. The strangers leave and Abraham is "Running Up That Hill (Make A Deal With G-d)", from *Hounds of Love* in 1985. He reckons if there are 10 righteous folks in Sodom and Gomorrah they won't get destroyed, pretty please. Smash cut to Lot chilling at the gates of Sodom, where he brings some angels to his house for a cozy night in. Literally everyone in town shows up demanding to rape them. Lot offers his virgin daughters to be raped instead, which the text paints as a good thing? The house Harry Potters out of sight, and the angels are like, yeah, no, we're going to destroy these cities for sure now. He leaves in the morning with his wife and daughters and they hide in Smallville while Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, except for the aforementioned wife who is now salt. There's a bad incest joke! Abraham and Sarah are on the road again and do the *Sister Act 2* but this time Hashem stops that early and they still get a bunch of money out of it. Yitzchak is born and Sarah is a horrid person again and they kick Hagar out. Hagar despairs in the wilderness but Hashem takes care of her and Ishmael. Abraham and the king what almost shtupped Sarah argue about a well. Abraham and Yitzchak go on a little retreat because Hashem wants to test their relationship with Him. And we end with a foreshadowing genealogy.

**Jaz:** So much happens in this parsha that I got whiplash re-reading it (Lulav laughs). Abraham welcomes some nosy guests, Sarah laughs at them and G-d makes fun of her for it then Abraham negotiates with G-d and wins. Lot is a gracious host but not a great dad but everyone else in the city is so much worse so they're destroyed and so is his wife. Lot's daughters are totally creepy which is just a way of slandering some neighbors and then Abraham thinks it's a good idea to mess with the local king and lies about his relationship with Sarah. Finally he fesses up and is rewarded with presents which is just a terrible incentive system. Isaac is born and grows up. Sarah throws Hagar out into the desert without water. G-d takes care of them and Ishmael grows up to be a hot hunter. (Lulav laughs) G-d pretends Abraham only has one son and asks Abraham to kill Isaac. Abraham makes a whole production about it and G-d slams on the brakes at the last second and everybody lives.

**Lulav:** Parashat Chayei Sarah.

**Jaz:** This Torah portion is called The Life of Sarah, and naturally, the first thing in this parsha is that Sarah immediately dies and then Abraham has to figure out how to bury her, and he has a slapstick back and forth of excessive politeness with the local Hittites trying to one up each other in hospitality, before finally just buying a grave. Then Abraham is like, "well, before I die too, I have one last thing on my bucket list, and that is messing around in my kid's romantic life," (*Lulav laughs*) so sends his former heir to go get a wife for his current heir, without bothering to bring said current heir along. So the dude goes on a quest and decides to pick a kind girl, and when he meets Rebecca, who's nice to animals, he concludes that's sufficient information, gives her jewelry, and only after that discovers that she is the first cousin of her intended husband. Nothing daunted, he speaks to her dad, who says "it's up to G-d, I guess!" But then the family stalls until Rebecca says, "no, I wanna go!" and then Isaac falls in love at first sight (*timer starts going off*) and then Abraham remarries and then dies and his sons bury him together and it's sweet.

**Lulav:** Comparing Sarah to Moshe, it turns out that spite keeps you alive seven years longer than being the most important prophet in our people's history. Avraham makes sure to document a property transfer, then of course his head servant wears a scroath to get a cousin for Yitzak to marry. Eliezer chances, perhaps by angelic boon, to find a helpful young lesbian who fits the bill. Rivka's mom wants one last hug. When they get back Rivka startles and hides from the men which is not the most heterosexual thing she could do? New gf's makes everything better for father and son, and we end with genealogy and peaceful death.

**Jaz:** Parashat Toldot.

**Lulav:** Rivka has a lot of miscarriages with result in twins, Esau and Yaakov. Both in prophecy and how they're born, it looks like Esau will be strong and will nonetheless serve Yaakov. Yitzchak prefers hunting with Esau. Rivka prefers stewarding with Yaakov. Esau was hungry one day and Yitzchak got him to sell his birthright for lentils. There's — or wait, no, sorry — (*Jaz laughs*) There's another famine and Yitzchak settles his family in Gerar at the behest of Abimelech. He does the *Sister Act Three* which hasn't come out yet and doesn't even star Whoopi Goldberg. Abimelech is like, not falling for that one again. Things go well in that harvest. The Philistines get jealous and Abimelech kicks them out. Yitzchak goes to the valley and digs a variety of wells until the Philistines no longer lay claim and he's far enough away. Abimelech comes along and makes a non-aggression pact at Abraham's old altar. Esau marries two Hittite women and they have a bad relationship with his parents. Yitzchak gets old and tells Esau to make a feast so he can bequeath his estate. Rivka hears this and (*loud ringing noise*)

**Jaz:** Uh huh (*laughs and loud ringing noise continues*)

**Lulav:** Yeah.

**Jaz:** (*laughs*) Alright, why don't you finish it out and I will see how long this takes so we have a good sense of how long that paragraph really was.

**Lulav:** Yeah. Hatches a plan with Yaakov to pull one over on Yitzchak. He gets the blessing of the estate and Esau's only blessing is that his life will be inconvenient and violent (*Jaz laughs*) and he'll rebel against Yaakov's rule. Rivka makes Yaakov run away for a while so Esau doesn't kill him, telling Esau, "ow, I hate our daughters in law, can our son marry one of my nieces?" Esau sees this and marries an Ishmaelite woman so his dad will love him again. The end.

**Jaz:** Yitzhak and Rivka had 20 child-free years, but then Yitzhak decided he wanted kids. Rivka had a hard pregnancy and did some magic about it, but her twins, Yaakov and Esau, still fought all the time. Plus, on top of that, suddenly there wasn't any food, so they travelled to another place and Rivka had to pretend to be Yitzhak's sister, but if they'd really wanted to pull that lie off, they probably shouldn't have had sex in a public place nearby the king; (*Lulav laughs*) maybe Rivka missed her more wild childless days. Yitzhak made a lot of money there and got in a spat with the neighbors, so the king told him to scram. Yaakov buys Esau's birthright with some red soup, and Rivka doesn't like Esau's wives. Rivka devises a plot to have Yaakov inherit, which involves tricking her practically blind husband, and it works! Esau gets a regular candy bar instead of a golden ticket and a whole chocolate factory, (*Lulav laughs*) and Rivka sends Yaakov off to her brother's house so Esau won't kill him. Before he leaves, Yitzhak takes Yaakov aside and makes him promise not to marry anyone Rivka wouldn't approve of, because everyone knows she really runs things around here, and gives him an additional candy bar — I mean blessing — for good luck.

**Lulav:** Parashat Vayeitzei

**Jaz:** In this chapter, Yaakov has a complicated polycule, and a lot of kids whose names are all puns. First, he's fleeing brother and has a dream about a ladder. This causes him to pour oil on a stone and promise to always donate 10% of his stuff. Then, he meets his cousin Rakhel and works for his uncle for seven years so he can marry her. But then wait! Like a cartoon villain, his uncle switches up the bride, and he marries the wrong sister, Leah! Then he works for another seven years and marries Rakhel this time, but Leah has an easier time having children, and the sisters fight a cold war via proxies like their kids and their maid, who Yaakov also has children with. Then Yaakov and his uncle play tricks on each other, trying to cheat each other out of sheep, and Yaakov wins, and then they run away with also his uncle's gods, which, Rakhel steals, and her dad chases them, and she hides them by saying she's on her period and it works. Yaakov and his uncle make a peace pack, AND scene.

**Lulav:** The golden boy is going to find some cousins to marry. He has a vision while traveling, of a ladder of messengers and G-d promising myriad descendants. He names the site "G-dhouse", missing the point in a kinda sweet way. Then he does some well-based shenanigans and goes

home with his cousins, where he bids a stupidly high amount of labor to marry the younger daughter, gets duped into marrying the older daughter, and agrees to the same contract again for the original deal, but with the wedding up front this time. There's a couple years of frankly appalling decisions about the new polygynous arrangement, including some kids who probably could've used a lot of therapy. Laban engages in blatant wage theft, so Yaakov starts a side hustle on company time. Yaakov lights out from Aram as he's trailed by twenty hounds, and Rakhel makes him a liar by pulling some typical younger-sibling nonsense with Laban's household gods. The men make an acrimonious nonaggression pact, around a pillar called Gal'ed — "Witness" — in the land of Gilead. (*timer rings*)

**Jaz:** Episode eight was our first one to have guests and also our first to be missing a host, since I was home with my family and Lulav vanished to go hang out with her parents I think? My ~baby~ brother who is now taller than me and can pick me up like I used to do with him when I was younger, David Nathan took on the challenge of doing the summary — you can hear him completely acing parashat Vayishlach.

**David Nathan:** 32: Jacob prepares to meet Esau. He sends messengers to Esau who return to tell Jacob that Esau is on his way with 400 men. Jacob is concerned that Esau is preparing to attack so he splits his group into two camps so at least one will be able to escape. Jacob selects a bunch of animals as gifts to appease Esau and sends them on ahead. Jacob sends the whole night wrestling with an angel who dislocates Jacob's hip and renames him Israel. 33: Jacob meet and embrace, but not before a lot of prostration from Jacob. 34: One of the Hivites rapes Jacob's daughter, but then wants to marry her so badly that he offers to pay any price. Jacob's sons, being angry about the violation of their sister, agree that she will marry him only if all the men in the town are circumcised, which they are and then Jacob's sons come and slaughter them all. 35: Jacob purifies the household of alien gods, goes to Bethel and builds an altar there and is renamed Israel again. Jacob journeys onward Deborah, Rachel, and Isaac die. 36: Esau has hella descendants. Time. (*ringer goes off*)

**Lulav:** The golden boy — now a golden man — leaves last week's acrimonious breakup with his father-in-law and braces for an acrimonious homecoming with his brother. Yaakov recites his own rags-to-riches story as a pep talk to himself, then decides to overcompensate for his guilt with gifts! Anticipating death, he secrets his family away across the river, but on his way back he learns the very Jewish technique of holding two truths simultaneously. In this case, though, holding "truths" is a euphemism for holding hips, like his busted one and the hip of the dude he's fighting in the middle of nowhere who is maybe himself. Regardless! He gets the name "Yisrael." In the morning, he limps up to his brother, who is absolutely blown away by the fact that he's an uncle and tries to assert that *he* is the hosting top in this familial relationship. After a top-off, Yisrael wins because "oh no, it's fine, we'll just get a hotel and see you tomorrow for lunch." Dinah — yes, I too forgot that Yisrael had daughters — has an interaction of questionable consent with a local, and her weirdly overprotective brothers murder everyone in the town after the townsfolk all get simple genital plastic surgery to fit in with the locals. The family has a fun religious retreat, as though they didn't just participate in genocide together!

Then Rachel dies in childbirth, and the son she named with her dying breath gets (*ringer goes off*) a different name on his birth certificate. Yitzhak also bites it — though at a more reasonable age — and Esau moves to Edom and makes a bunch of descendants.

**Lulav:** I felt HORRIDLY SLIGHTED that we had skipped my turn to summarize, so when DiCo joined us and chose not to do a short summary, I took the next TWO episodes. Hear the first of those with parashat Vayeishev.

**Lulav:** Yaakov's favorite child is Yosef, who tells his self-aggrandizing dreams to his brothers for some reason. The brothers plot to kill him, though Ruven is in favor of just chucking him in a pit. They tear his amazing technicolor dream coat to "prove" he's dead, and Yehuda sells him into slavery to passersby. Yaakov is very sad, and Yosef is in Egypt now. Yehuda goes on to have children, and two die for various reasons including masturbation. He accidentally does a sex with his daughter-in-law, which means his third (surviving) son can't be her third husband, to her benefit. Yosef is doing well as an Egyptian house slave but gets propositioned by his master's wife and she frames him for rape when he refuses her. He is thrown in the pharaoh's prison, but becomes the prison kapo because he's so personable & responsible. Some prisoners have dreams, which Yosef interprets. Even though the prophetic interpretations come true, the surviving prisoner doesn't remember Yosef positively after being released. (*timer goes off*)

**Jaz:** Joseph's dad made him a pride coat because he's proud of him, and also because he's gay. Joseph dreamed that he was the coolest metaphorical cat around, which annoyed his brothers so much they decided to throw him in a pit. Then, in Unintended Consequences Town, population: Joseph's brothers, some other people came along, found Joseph in the pit, and sold him. So the brothers hastily told their dad that Joseph had died, because apparently that was better? (*Lulav chuckles*) Interlude to focus on older brother Judah's messed up family, including the introduction of masturbation and a father-in-law being terrible, but thankfully being outwitted by his smarter and sexier daughter-in-law. Okay, now cut back to Joseph, working for a rich guy in Egypt and doing pretty okay for himself, until the rich guy's wife is determined to sleep with him, and when he refuses, the rich lady decides if she can't have his beauty, she should frame him like a picture on her wall and gets him sent to prison. Joseph kisses up to the jailer, and interprets some dreams which he hopes will be his ticket out, but one of the dreaming people gets killed and the other one forgets all about him, so, it seems like a bust. Done.

**Jaz:** Parashat Mikeitz.

**Lulav:** The Pharaoh dreams of carnivorous cows and herbivorous grains. The cup-bearer pays off our cliffhanger and points the Pharaoh to Yosef. Our boy says they're the same dream, and that there will be plenty before famine, and he makes recommendations on agri-policy involving

a royal secretary. Unsurprisingly, the Pharaoh is like, "Wait, *you* could be that secretary!" and gives him a signet ring and fancy duds, and I guess a wife? Grain is gathered and two sons come to Yosef & Asenat: Forgetfulness, and the Silver Hand of Samoths- uhhhh, I mean "Plenty." The famine is BAD, all over, but Egypt had prepared and sells the stored grain to both its people and visitors. Some of the latter are Yaakov's sons, all but Binyamin of whom he sends to purchase grain. Said brothers happen to show up where Yosef is - he recognizes them, but pretends they're spies because THEY don't recognize HIM. He insists they bring Bibi to Egypt to "prove they're telling the truth," and some BENEVOLENT SHENANIGANS go down. Since the brothers don't know they're shenanigans, they are VERY AFRAID and so is Yaakov. He is named Yisrael, however, as the brothers convince him to send Binyamin - Yudah taking personal responsibility for Bibi's safety. Yisrael sends some gifts along, too. They get there and Yosef throws them all a feast - with extra for the youngest. (*ringer goes off*) The chapter ends with LESS BENEVOLENT SHENANIGANS and a cliffhanger of Bibi taken as Yosef's slave.

**Jaz:** Joseph gets his prison sentence commuted because he is of use to the state as an economist who performs the *W(sic)* duty of dream interpretation and setting the fiscal policy for thousands of people. He hears from Pharaoh about thin cows swallowing fat cows and withered corn swallowing healthy corn and says, "there's a storm a-comin' boys". He becomes the administrator of Egypt's agricultural sector. His family, meanwhile, is suffering, and when the good years are up go to the neighbouring country for help. Joseph frames them for thievery, makes them br— bring back Benjamin even though Jacob is super sad about that, shows marked favouritism for little Benji, and then frames them for thievery again. (*timer goes off*) He's having capital-F Feelings about trauma, and so he makes his brothers beg for their lives and liberty. Cliffhanger!

**Lulav:** Parashat Vayigash.

**Jaz:** Judah convinces Joseph of his true change of heart by invoking dad, Joseph comes out to his brothers and they're like, "Is it a ghost?" Joseph says, "Excuse you, my eyes look just like my full, real sibling," and weeps, and now they're all back on speaking terms! Israel — the dude, not the nation — comes down, (*Lulav chuckles*) they bring the whole tribe, there are so many of them and we get literally so many names, and then they all move to Egypt, where there is still famine and starvation, and Israel says he can die happy now that he's seen his son, but also that his life has been kinda miserable. Also, Joseph takes

everybody's stuff and land and nationalizes it, by making basically the whole population sell themselves into slavery except for the priests who have government healthcare. Done.

**Lulav:** Yehuda is in deep trouble after Yoseph's funky little sting operation caught the intended younger brother, so he promises himself to Yoseph as Binyamin's replacement. Like a lachrymose Ashton Kutcher emerging from a dumpster, Yoseph cries a whole bunch while telling the assembled brothers that they've been punkd. He rationalizes the whole, uh, kidnapped by slavers thing by noting the family might not have eaten for the next half decade without him being an Egyptian slave. Yisrael hears that his son is alive, and immediately moves his tiny nuclear household of 70 to Egypt where he is preceded by Yehuda, greeted by the Pharaoh and given the nasty shepherd land which is actually pretty ideal for the family. Finally Yoseph engineers a massive restructuring of the economy to capitalize on, enslaving the non-priests [*timer goes off*] for the foreseeable future. [*timer goes off*]

**Jaz:** Parashat Vayechi.

**Lulav:** Yosef makes a thigh-oath to bury Yisrael with his ancestors, and Yisrael offers blessings to his sons. Yisrael repeats his general favoritism for the youngest, blessing Ephraim over Manasseh despite Yosef's protestations. He also punnily gives Yosef the genocided town from Vayishlach, I think? There's a big ol' death poem where he makes predictions for his sons, blessing Yehuda and Yosef MUCH better than any of the others. Yisrael is mummified, I guess, and gets not just a shloshim but a sheviim from the Egyptians. Literally the entire royal court of Egypt goes to Canaan for the funeral and mourns ANOTHER seven days in the middle there. The brothers explicitly apologize for abandoning Yosef, but he reassures them partly to avoid sacrilege. Yosef dies, is mummified, and that is all. M'reishit l'keitz.. (*pause, then timer goes off*)

**Jaz:** Two patriarchs die in this parsha, but, although you might therefore think this is a pretty feminist text, most of the parsha is listening to them talk. (*Lulav laughs*) Yaakov / Yisrael decides to repeat hi- on his death bed, the same bad decision he's made for his whole adult life and show marked favoritism among his children. He gives Yosef a double inheritance and picks the younger Ephraim over the older Menasseh because he just cannot resist that inexplicable thing about younger siblings, I guess? He then recites a long and kind of scolding poem that includes (*Lulav giggles*) his grudges about his other children and his predictions for everyone's future, and then they turn him into a mummy. It's a whole political deal, apparently, when the dad of an upper bureaucrat dies, so the literal entire country goes into mourning for over two months, and then the siblings awkwardly attempt to reconcile with Yoseph, who they've never really been chill with after that whole, putting baby in a pit thing. (*Lulav laughs*) Yaakov gets shipped back to the family burial plot, and by the end of the parsha, so does Yoseph.



**Lulav:** And so ends the Book-In-The-Beginning! After finishing up Genesis, which is packed tight with family drama and myths of global creation & destruction, we zoom in on one particular mythical generation on their way out of the Narrow Place. We begin Shemot, or "Exodus", with parashat Shemot.

**Jaz:** There suddenly lots of Israelites! Pharaoh invented the dual loyalty trope and enslaved them (*Lulav chuckles*), then tried to kill all the babies! Shiphrah and Puah saved them, go midwives! They lied to Pharaoh, and then Pharaoh told soldiers to go murder babies instead. One woman hid her baby in the river, with his older sister watching, and a princess came and adopted him, and this is , who was still basically raised by his biological family, though they pretended to be wet nurses and such. When Moshe grew up, he saw overseer brutality and killed the perpetrator of it, and soon after fled so Pharaoh wouldn't kill him for it. Moses helps out a group of friendly shepherds and then intermarries with Tziporah and has a kid. Then the Pharaoh died, and G-d finally noticed all was not well with the Israelites! So G-d spoke to Moshe from a burning bush and Ze told him to go back, and Moshe was super afraid and also had impostor syndrome and said, "Why me? What do I say? What if they don't listen? What if my speech impediment gets in the way?" (*Lulav laughs*) and G-d goes, "uh, here's a script, here's some miracles, here's a disability accommodation, it's gotta be you, my dude." Moshe goes, with wife and child, and then there is a threat to life and body and Tziporah fixes it with blood magic! Then brother Aaron comes to help and together they announce to the people that G-d is there to rescue them, and they go to Pharaoh and say, "let my people go" and he says, "no, go away," and punishes people for rebelling and they say, "oh no, it's the fault of the people who tried to organize, I guess we shouldn't be organized or try to go away." (*both laugh, and then timer rings*)

**Lulav:** We start with the sprouts & blossoms of Yisrael, who struck root v'Mitzraim with Yaakov. Yosef's pet monarch was replaced by-and-by, and this guy didn't like dandelions. He assumed that the gardeners who were themselves dandelions would help with weeding, which was blessedly not an effective idea. Given the medical establishment's lack of complicity in genocide, the king doubled down on policing; luckily, one lady was able to avoid drowning her child AND got to raise it anyway in the lap of luxury. We don't focus on the thousands of people who didn't avoid it, though. Anyway, Drew-who-got-drawn-from-the-river murdered a dude for doing hate crimes, but got spooked when two Hebrews didn't clock him as an ally, so he ran away to the desert. In Midian, he was nice to some gals with a fancy & hospitable dad or five, and got a baby out of it. Eventually the genocidal weirdo got replaced by a marginally less genocidal weirdo, so the god Burning-Without-Burning got Drew's attention to draw him back

home. He didn't love this idea - Who am I? Who are you? What if they don't believe the spoilers? What if they think I'm a nerd, or don't want to listen to my stutter? And so was Drew made the prophet of Being, [timer goes off] and so his wife did some sacrificial romantic [timer goes off] sorry, cosmetic surgery on their son, and so he went with his brother to win some early activism successes organizing the Hebrews. He and the new king argued about PTO in such a way that the descendants of Yisrael received retributive busywork, and we ended on that cliffhanger way after the alarm went off.

**Jaz:** Parashat Va'eira.

**Lulav:** Last time on Sh'mot: We had a covenant, and the Being God will see it through. Moshe is Levi's great-grandson, apparently. The game is rigged, but our intrepid hero starts it off by playing with the big boys. First plague — the river of life becomes a river of blood. Second plague — Aharon joins the shenanigans with anurakinesis, and we're unbindingly promised a holiday by Pharaoh. The brothers make gnats & flies (except in Goshen), and Pharaoh makes a prayer closet. Cow plagues, human plagues, and weather plagues get us temporary and empty promises. Done!

**Jaz:** Moshe has been given a task but is like, "if my own people won't listen to me, for sure the Pharaoh is gonna be super ableist about this", so his support team in the form of his brother is there too to take notes. There are a bunch of Israelites who are in charge of other Israelites so we have lots of out of any useful context names. (*Lulav snorts*) Then G-d repeats some instructions under the principle of anything important you are teaching should be said at least three times, then these two octogenarians do a magic trick featuring (*Lulav giggles*) transfiguring a stick into a snake, but then their rival bootlicker magician foes (*Lulav laughs*) do the same thing, and the dictator sneers about it. So the old guys, backed up by G-d's explicit instructions on the matter, turn all the potable water and possibly the non-potable water into liquid that would only qualify as potable if the whole country was made of vampires. It's gross and makes fish die so it's smelly. Uh, once again, rival trickster magic workers do the same and next time it's frogs here, frogs there, frogs jumping everywhere, and when they die they also stink. Again, rivals match them but next there is live and they can't beat lice and are like, "oh no! G-d is fingering the country!", and next there are swarms of insects and then a bunch of farm animals die and then everyone had major allergic reactions to dust and then hail hurt a bunch of people and then Pharaoh said, "okay fine, get out of here" but then it stopped hailing and he was like, "n- wait. Nope, I take it back, you can't leave". (*Lulav laughs*) [timer goes off]

**Lulav:** Parashat Bo.

**Jaz:** G-d says Ze's preventing Pharaoh from letting them go on purpose, to show off. Moshe and Aharon go to Pharaoh and demand a break in the wilderness, threatening more plagues, and Pharaoh's advisers say, "let the leaders go already!" But Moses and Aharon chant, "none of us are free until all of us are free!" (*Lulav laughs*) and Pharaoh is like, "uh uh, I can't listen to that kind of radical nonsense." Then locusts eat everything, and Pharaoh is like, "scram," but G-d blows the locusts away like the house in the Wizard of Oz. Then Pharaoh changes his mind again, so G-d turns out the light, and no one can see anything except the Israelites, because apparently they don't have candles or anything in the whole country. (*Lulav laughs*) So Pharaoh's like, "this sucks and everyone's going to get Seasonal Affective Disorder, get out of here, all of you, and bring all your stuff," but Moshe is like, "no we want your stuff too, and Pharaoh says no. (*Lulav chuckles*) So G-d's like, okay, this will be the last plague, tell people to "borrow" (*Lulav laughs*) gold and silver and stuff, and they mysteriously do get it. Then before they even leave, we hear a long description of how to celebrate Pesach in future years, which includes a sacrificial lamb and mandatory matzah. So Israelites put lamb's blood on the doors like a mezuzah, and in every home that didn't have that (*ringer goes off*). Nooo!

**Lulav:** Okay SO we have the back end of the plagues — only three left! Moshe brings the threat of locusts, to which Pharaoh is like "ah, sure, but you can't bring your children to worship". Moshe responds to this \$600 placation with a frankly stupid number of locusts. Pharaoh is like "fine, you don't get \$600 anyway GREATER-THAN COLON CARAT OPEN-PARENTH >:^(", (*Jaz laughs*) and Moshe loads up some tangible darkness in the curse cannon. Pharaoh offers \$2000 one time, and Moshe is like "okay but what about free healthcare tho" and Pharaoh breaks off negotiations entirely. The Egyptian people hand over some jewelry as reparations, and Moshe warns about the curse of the firstborn. The Israelites get instructions on safe & orderly evacuation, including paschal sacrifice and the promise of future matzah parties. Once Pharaoh is personally affected by the results of his decisions, (timer goes off) he INSISTS that every Jew leave the country entirely, which as far as we know in THIS portion is the end of it. Lastly, we are told to consecrate every firstborn to Hashem, and to redeem the human firstborn from this consecration. If I had actually been reading that at top speed it would have been 60 seconds, I promise.

**Jaz:** Parashat Beshalach.

**Lulav:** The Israelites make their exodus, traveling through the wilderness to avoid conflict. They take Yosef's bones, like he asked, and they are guided by cloud and fire. Egyptians pursue with slave-hunting chariots but the sea parts to allow the Israelites through and subsequently collapses on the pursuers. We all sing Mi Chamocho, presumably not the Debbie Friedman tune, but you never know.

**Anat:** Eh, probably was.

**Lulav:** Bitter waters are filtered by a miracle tree, so no one goes thirsty. Mitzvot keep you healthy, according to the name.

**Anat:** That's true.

**Lulav:** Moshe and Aaron get manna and quails, so no one goes hungry. Keeping Shabbat is accounted for, according to the Name.

**Anat:** Yes, wow.

**Lulav:** Somehow they partied forty times on a diet solely of manna and quails, (*Anat laughs*) um, Moshe strikes a rock for water, which I'm sure will never come up again, and please note that all the miracles from the sea on, are in response to the people kvetching. We end with a fight against Amalek (*alarm sounds*) while Moshe is cheer squad. (*Jaz and Anat laugh*)

**J:** So everybody's leaving Mitzrayim. Moses is hurrying them out so they'll be too busy to be scared and Pharaoh decides, "you know what? No. They can't leave, I never said they could leave, you have no proof I said that, not even the video of me saying that", and he takes after them with the national guard. They can't escape because there's a whole sea in front of them so the crowd snarks at Moses, "What? There wasn't enough space in the cemetery back there? You had to bring us here to get killed?"--

**L:** (*muffled laughter*) Woof.

**J:** And he's like, "guys, guys, no leftist infighting, please," and holds up his arms and they could walk through the sea like its land and their pursuers can't, then Moses sings a long song. Miriam sings a short song. People complain about the lack of basic necessities like clean water and food. Moses complains back at them that they're not being (*snobby voice*) appropriately civil, but then G-d gives them water and food in quantities enough for everyone to fully eat no matter how much they found or how much they worked. There was always extra on Fridays so they could take a day off on Saturday, but this took some getting used to and at first they were suspicious. It tasted like coriander, which was fine but they did have to eat it for 40 years straight. Then G-d told Moses to hit a rock for some water (*timer goes off*) and Moses did that and that time it was fine! Finally, they fought with Amalek and were told to blot out the memory of them.

**Lulav:** Parashat Yitro.

**Jaz:** First we hang out with Moshe's super definitely not Jewish father-in-law and learn that Moshe respects him so, so much and then Jethro teaches Moshe about the holy power of delegating your work so you don't burn out. Then Jethro goes home and Moshe goes up Mount Doom and there's fire and smoke and alarm and no cuddling allowed. (*Lulav chuckles*) Then Moshe gets the ten commandments, and the people say, "Moshe, we'll listen to you as long as you don't make us listen to G-d directly because that was terrible." Done.

**Lulav:** Our guy Yitro brings Moshe's family to him el hamidbar and gets pretty hype about the whole deliverance thing. He gets unhype about Moshe's inability to delegate, and insists upon having a robust hierarchy for resolving disputes. Then, Moshe is put in charge of cutting a new covenant, which results in that godcloud we've missed so much these last couple months. The People get dressed up in their nice Yom Kippur kittels, and are treated to a baller pyrotechnics show while they receive the Ten Commandments. The parsha ends with an admonition against fine idol-fine idol- fine- yeah. And the charge for simple, *[timer goes off]* unworked, ground-floor altars.

**Jaz:** Parashat Mishpatim.

**Lulav:** We start with some codifications on slavery, felony and tort, as well as some general moral instructions including but not even mostly about bloodlust for witches. We establish chagim and a little bit of kashrut. There is the proclamation of a guiding warrior angel?! The structure of the Temple is prefaced a bit by worship instructions and Moshe writes everything he just heard in a book. Then, Moshe goes up a mountain over the course of 47 days to receive more instructions. Done.

**Jaz:** Rules week! We get a bunch of instructions on how to treat people, starting with enslaved men, and working our way through enslaved women, fetuses, pregnant people, fighting people, animals, neighbors, thieves, bankers, sorcerers, strangers, poor people, and the land. These boil down to people being allowed to keep other humans enslaved if they're quote-unquote "good slave owners"—

**Lulav:** *(unimpressed)* Uh-huh.

**Jaz:** —But also reminders that fetuses are different than people. That the most important part about thievery is that you get your stuff back, and some solid eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth, retributive justice. Plus reminders to worship G-d and keep Shabbat, before a very quick injunction about boiling a kid in its mother's milk that will set the basis for eons of kashrut debates. Then, G-d tells Moses about an angel that will be coming soon and how their enemies will flee in panic. Then Moses, some priest's sons, and seventy elders bow on a mountaintop. Moses seals the covenant in ram's blood, there's a little feast, and Moses goes up the mountain for forty days to get some more holy rules while leaving some big delegating instructions behind him.

**Lulav:** Parashat Terumah.

**Jaz:** (*chanting*) Holy crafting! Holy crafting! Uh, we make the mishkan out of gold and silver and all sorts of cool yarn and then G-d can come dwell among us! Done.

**Lulav:** Hashem does the millennial thing and gives all of its friends a very explicit list of acceptable gifts. This is a good idea, because it's trying to make a big project with a pretty complex ingredient list, and it is also a weird idea, given that two parshot ago Hashem said the only acceptable altar was dirt or a small boulder the size of a large boulder. (*Jaz laughs*) The gifts, in contrast, are wrought in gold and silver and acacia and bespoke weaves and mythical hides - a bookchest and some lighting; vast tents and layered holinesses; an altar in wood with implements of worked metal. [*timer goes off*]

**Jaz:** Parashat Tetzaveh.

**Lulav:** Everybody's got to bring me olive oil. We establish the Levite priesthood in our sexy, sexy vestments then elaborate on sacrifices in the priestly ordination and our daily practice. Hint: There's a lot of meat. We wrap up with a lot of incense (*Timer rings*) though also some animal blood.

**Jaz:** This whole week is an Ikea pamphlet from G-d to Moses, but instead of furniture, it's instructions on making fancy clothes and accessories for priests. G-d is partial to a particular palette of specific shades of red, blue, purple and gold and uses them for everything. Robes, symbolic bib with a rectangle tic-tac-toe board on it, a crown, a turban and a sash. Priests wear these clothes plus underwear to do the most important duties. Also, to get those priests ready to be priests, you kill a bunch of animals ceremonially and put some blood on dudes. Then there's a little more explication on how to kill the animals and how to make the altar and how [*timer goes off*] burning incense is super fancy.

**Lulav:** Parashat Ki Tisa.

**Jaz:** First the census, then some useful rules about washing your hands making nice smells and fancy oils and Bezalel was the craftiest kid of the bunch. (*Lulav laughs*) While G-d's talking to Moshe about Shabbat, people get impatient and build a Golden Calf because Aaron can't lead. Moshe is so angry he breaks the tablets with G-d's writing on them, and then makes the people drink yucky stuff. Moshe yells at his brother and then kills a lot of people, and tries to distance

himself from them, but then does argue with G-d to try to keep everybody else alive. G-d kind of throws a hissy fit for a lot of this parsha and acts like a child. Moshe sees G-d corporeally and G-d promises to be with them and to forgive but not forget. (*Lulav chuckles*) Moshe carves some new tablets and they all promise to be monogamous with G-d. Do I mean monotheistic? Only kinda, honestly! (*Lulav chuckles*) Then we get the basis for much of kashrut as we know it in one little sentence about boiling a kid in its mother's milk, that has resulted in some kitchens having milk plates and meat plates. Finally, Moshe wears a veil and glitters in the sunlight and gets more Torah.

**Lulav:** We start just chatting about the temple tax that's paid when the census is taken, and then, a pleasant discussion of washbasins and sacred boy butter and incense. The latter two of which are copyright protected. Then we learn about Betzalel, master craftsman, who's probably named after one of our twitter followers, plus also, Acholiav who gets anglicized very strangely. Then, things really pop off. Moshe gets tablets but the people neg Aharon about making an idol during his absence, he gathers the gold jewelry that everyone brought from Egypt, and, uh, where'd that golden cow statue come from? It was just there, bro, I swear! (*Jaz chuckles*) Moshe talks Hashem down from killing everyone, again, by calling to mind the covenant and God's rep. He plays bad parent shattering the tablets he brought, and scrubbing everyone's mouth out with gold, and, uh... Telling the Levites to murder 3,000 of their kin? Plus also there's a plague. We get some metish(unsure of word - 9:41 ?? ) physical rules about how you die if you see (*timer goes off*) Elohim, because She has dysphoria or something? (*timer goes off*) Skimmed that part, frankly. Uhh, Moshe makes two more tablets, but these one he carves himself. There are extra commandments, with more details this time! We end the parsha with the people proclaiming Moshe's face to be holy beat.

**Jaz:** Our first joint parsha! This one was the same for both years, so you can hear us both give parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei our best shot.

**Lulav:** Hey! Remember Shabbat, and don't light fires. Moshe relates the Mishkan plans to the people and a whole bunch of Israelites love the idea of this crafting project. Bezalel and Oholiab are the camp counselors and the booster club brings so many supplies that that Moshe actually has to turn them away. Not even counting fabric, they get a metric ton of gold, three and a half tons of silver, and two and a half tons of bronze. They make the things as requested just in case you were wondering. On the next Rosh Hashanah, Moshe assembles the ark of the covenant, just kind of out in the open, but then he brings it into the Mishkan, and that messenger cloud glides in, ready to guide the people. (*Timer rings*) Alright!

**Jaz:** Lots of detailed instructions this week. Observe shabbat and make a mishkan with blue, purple and crimson yarn, fine linen and the skin of a mysterious animal that is maybe a dolphin but we are not really sure. Also, goat hair spun by wise hearted women and all this building and crafting is organized by the Tzalel who is hella cool with his buddy Acholiab. People were so eager to help that they donated hella supplies and eventually Moses had to say, "hold up, that's too many supplies, no more please! We're swamped!". Then there were loops of gold and planks of acacia wood and fancy gold angels in the tent and a menorah and an altar of gold with incense that would definitely have given me a headache (*Lulav chuckles*) and some cool copper mirrors. Then Moses did a quick accounting to tell people where all their donations had gone and made fancy clothes for the priests with breast pieces in front of gold and symbolic jewels. That was everything and so Moses burned some stuff to say it's ready and holy and the presence of G-d came in the form of an alternating cloud or fire column that hung out in the middle of camp.

**Lulav:** That wraps up the Book of Names! This next one is called "Leviticus" in English -- that is to say, "a book about what the Levites do". In Hebrew, though, its title is Vayikra: "G-d called". This is the one where about half of the parshot begin with "And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying:", and the other half have something to do with saying, telling, or calling. Let's talk about the first one: parashat Vayikra.

**Jaz:** Make offerings! Big ones, and little ones. Ones of goats, ones from birds, and ones of flour. Ones for well-being, and ones to apologize. Ones for individual wrong-doing, and ones for communal wrong-doing. One from the people, and ones from the leaders. Ones from the rich, and ones from the poor. Bring all kinds of offerings, and follow a specific order when you do so, um, so that you're following the steps for a proper old-fashioned apology to G-d, who will then be chill with you. Done.

**Lulav:** The Name is kra-ing at Moshe, talking about all kinds of acceptable sacrifices and the work that the kohanim have to do to offer them acceptably. What goes in the fire? No leaven, no honey, yes salt. What goes in the mouth? No fat, no blood. When priests do a commandment oopsie, they sacrifice a bull. When the whole of the people do a commandment oopsie, they all sacrifice a single bull. If a chief does a commandment oopsie? Goat sacrifice. If a rando does a commandment oopsie, goatess sacrifice. If someone doesn't offer important information that could help people out, or retroactively discovers they touched a nasty thing, they gotta bring a sacrifice that is within their means. HOWEVER, if someone does a targeted ill instead of just an oopsie, they must bring a ram and 120% repayment. Done!

**Jaz:** Parashat Tzav.



**Lulav:** Did you do something bad to someone, including by lying to them? Make up for it, plus 20%. Of course, you not only need to make up for it to the person wronged, you need to make it right with Hashem! Next up, we note that the altar of burnt offering shall always and forever be burning, and that priests need bespoke linen garments to take the ashes from its fire. The grain offering? It's gotta be unleavened, and the priests will eat some but not all of it. We also have sin offerings, which are set apart and partially eaten, as long as their blood doesn't get used inside the mishkan. Honestly, a lot of offerings get eaten, except anything you might put in the fridge goes in the fire instead. In case you weren't listening last time: no fat! No blood! Moshe does the ordination ceremony from episode 20, and puts Aharon and his sons on holy time-out for seven days.

**Jaz:** Lots of stuff here about priests and sacrifices! Instructions about keeping the fire going forever, offerings of flour and oil and stuff that sounds kinda like matzah, appropriately enough. Anyway, if you're becoming a priest, you offer French toast to G-d, plus some meat, and if you get blood on your dress while slaughtering the meat, you make like a French revolutionary at a guillotining and treasure the blood-splattered keepsake. You can't eat this meal though — it gets all burned up and you just get to smell it wistfully. But there are different sacrifices for different things, and if you're offering up meat for a gratitude offering, you can eat that meat that day. And if it's a "just cuz" offering, you can eat it that day and the next day. There are also bonus rules, like no blood-drinking or eating from live animals, or things that you might really hope you wouldn't have to say and Moses listened to all this and then used it in a ritual to make some priests out of Aaron's sons with lots of burning and sprinkling and additional wearing of fancy clothes.

**Lulav:** We switched the order up a bit because in both seasons, our Pesach episode came right after Tzav. Give those a listen! In the first season, we talk about what Pesach means and share some listener submissions about their own Pesach traditions. In the second season, where the release date was the first of April, we DEFINITELY DON'T talk about Homestuck for 56 minutes. Anyway, our Torah reading continues with parashat Shemini.

**Lulav:** Hashem and the kohanim play a most dangerous version of Simon Says, ending when some of Aharon's sons incorrectly honor a miracle. After the corpse disposal, Moshe runs down appropriate food & drink for consumption within the Mishkan. In the process, he discovers that the kohanim already burned the sin offering, rather than consuming the parts they were supposed to. Aharon argues with Moshe for the first time about halachah, and Moshe is happy about it! The rest is about which animals are kosher for all Israelites to consume — and which

are not. This also includes some confusingly worded instructions about how vessels and moisture play into things; I will definitely have to talk those out with you.

**Jaz:** Moses and Aaron told the people to bring animal sacrifices, and they did, and Aaron dramatically ritually slaughtered the animals in front of everybody, one animal at a time, with his sons passing him things, mostly blood. Then those brothers blessed all the people and fire came from G-d and burnt up all the offerings and all the people were like, whoa! Aaron's kids, Nadab and Abihu, were like "that seems cool" and also tried to offer up some stuff (incense, in their case) but G-d hadn't asked for that and was... incensed.

**Lulav:** Ayy.

**Jaz:** Anyway, G-d burned up this younger set of siblings. Moses was kinda rude about it to Aaron, and no one in the immediate family was allowed to mourn for them publicly, in case G-d was upset, though other people could. Then G-d gave instructions directly to Aaron, which included no apologies for killing his kids, but did include instructions about not being drunk in office and distinguishing between different states of being. Moses gave Aaron's other children more instructions about where they should eat sacred food, and learned that they had already burned a particular offering instead of eating it where he said, and was unhappy. Then G-d gives Moses a bunch of kashrut instructions: gotta have hooves, no pigs, no scavengers, no water-dwelling bottom-feeders, no insects, no dishes that have had dead reptiles or gross water in them, etc, because your body is a temple. Done. *[timer goes off]*

**Jaz:** The Torah says wash your hands and maintain social distancing! If there's a rash, or a burn, or weird hairs, have someone come look at it and check you. Regular baldness does NOT count as weird hair though. *(Lulav laughs)* Also, if other people might come near you while you're germy, call out loudly to scare them away. Also, in general, wash yourself, your clothes, everything you touch, shave your your head, sacrifice a bird, and then later a mammal or whatever you can afford. Oh also, if disease is in your house, first wait it out but literally throw the whole house out if you have to and be willing to just totally burn your clothes. Also if any weird suspicious things come out of you or into your body. *(Lulav laughs)* like semen and menstrual blood or human babies, again, wash literally everything and also wait a few days before touching more people or they will also have to wash literally everything.

**Lulav:** V'yidaber Hashem el Moshe that those who give birth may not touch holy things until they wait it out and make themselves clean -- extra wait time if you're ~~saddled~~ with a girl child. Rashes? Tell a priest IMMEDIATELY to get further observation and quarantine. We get a surprisingly detailed menu of what the problem could be - all one thing or another is fine, but mixing states of affliction up is pretty bad. Torah says you're responsible for others' health when

you're sick. Uh, These general rules apply to thi- apply to *things* as well. Are you ready to reenter society? Well, let's do some bird crimes or other sundry animal-related performance art about it. Oh also, extremely detailed closing note about not getting potential biohazards where others could touch.

**Lulav:** Aharon is in the doghouse after the whole calf thing and his sons losing Simon Says. He is charged with the first Yom Kippur. G-d says you gotta do sacrifices in the mishkan now. People aren't to be trusted not to worship other gods. Also, in case you weren't listening don't eat blood. Incest is bad with enough examples that if you have to ask if it counts, it probably does. Also, period stripping and pegging are on the same level as baby sacrifice and bestiality, apparently. Every other nation sucks because they do these things, supposedly. We have a refresher and extension course on a couple of relational laws from a previous parsha. And then the parsha wraps up with demanding death for several of the things G-d just covered. And in case you didn't catch the three times this was said, Adonai hates wizards.

**Lulav:** Parashat Emor.

**Jaz:** Priests and their families get extra rules. They're about all of the important things: death, marriage, food, bodies, donations. The people get a couple more rules about sacrifice and then G-d invented the calendar with a bunch of pre-programmed holidays in chronological orders: Shabbat, Pesach, the Omer, Shevuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. Also, someone was rude about G-d and Moses asked G-d what to do, and G-d said, "Treat everyone the same and also kill him!" So the people pretended to stone him.

**Lulav:** Oh, you're a priest? Don't touch the dead unless they're literally in your house. Also, don't shave close enough that you might bleed. Only marry a virgin, and then lock up your daughters. You mourn the dead by keeping it together. Also, we can't have any cripples or uggos stinking up the Temple. Don't mismanage congregational funds. Only let family members eat sacred donations if they are ritually pure, and make sure temple offerings look smexy too. Don't sacrifice a whole family of livestock, or any livestock that have spent less than a week *ex vivo*. Uhh...clear your plate, there are starving children in Amalek. Remember that we have holidays, including Sefirat HaOmer and Sukkot, and...oh, right, one time, a halvesie did a blasphemy and got stoned for it — eye for an eye, and all that.

**Jaz:** Here's Parashat Behar-Bechukotai, where my good friend Jill Levinson gave us a delightful summary during season 2.

**Lulav:** We establish fractal shabbatot: every seventh year the fields lie unworked; the seventh of these seven unworked years is followed by a "jubilee" of another unworked year and debt forgiveness. Real estate is held in family lines, and sales thereof are prorated to distance from a jubilee year, when it will be returned to the family. The exception is dwellings, within walled cities, that are not owned by the Levites. Obligation to take care of the poor is also held in family lines — don't charge interest, and don't enslave... I would like to say "people", but textually it is "family members". *You* can enslave non-Israelites forever, but *they're* not allowed to enslave Israelites past the jubilee. Btw: no idols. If you keep the commandments, you'll be well-fed and powerful and G-d will be present among you. If you don't, you'll be tortured progressively — including with cannibalism — until you repent, because G-d wants to maintain the covenants. Then we talk about human equivalents for explicit vows, and the exchange rates when people sell animals to the priesthood or sell or buy their land, and we double back to that bit from Sh'mot about the firstborn of herd animals being for Adonai. We finish out the kra-ing of mitzvot by talking about what it means to tithe.

**Jill:** So, Behar-Bechukotai is essentially G-d saying "f--k around and find out." And Jews being like, "Okay." Which really is the entirety of Judaism, to move beyond just Behar-Bechukotai itself, I feel like all of Judaism is really G-d saying "f--k around and find out," and Jews f--king around and finding out. *[laughs]*

**Lulav:** Out of the Calling and into the Wilderness! In English we call this one "Numbers", because it's census after census; in Hebrew we take a more holistic approach, in honor of how the wandering, civil unrest, additional laws, AND of course multiple censuses all take place bamidbar. It starts with parashat Bamidbar.

**Jaz:** G-d has Moshe take a census that's also a draft, by tribe, and apparently all the tribes come in neat exact groups of 50. *(Lulav laughs)* There are so many people from the tribe of Judah. Then we count them again, to group the tribes into four big groups, North, South, East, and West. The Levites are Avatar of all four locations, and aren't part of the draft, so they have a separate census, where they do not come in neat groups of 50 and also it turns out that there's way fewer of them. There's a breakdown within the Levites of who belongs to which family and has which super holy or less holy roles. Moshe pays G-d some cash and cattle because there's not quite enough Levites, and we end with yet another census and the Kohathites play a fun game of "don't touch the holy object or you'll die." Done.

**Lulav:** Bamidbar anew. It's time to take a census of every man 20+ who is able to bear arms, excepting beit Levi, of course. There are 603,550 at time of counting. The Levitical lack is then

explained – they're busy marching with the mishkan. We get some rough sketches of how camps are divided by ancestral house, and then a genealogy of Moshe and Aharon. Then, some accounting. The Levites are consecrated to Hashem in exchange for all the firstborn of all the houses. Torah is pretty clear on not actually sacrificing children, y'know? The houses within the house of Levi are assigned their duties in the middle, but then they retake a census of firstborns and we get that good good monetary exchange over the 273 that don't match up. Finally, because the structure here wasn't twisted enough, b'nei Koha from beit Levi are assigned teamster duties.

**Lulav:** I felt bad about monopolizing all the summaries earlier, so in our second season, when Jaz was missing for an episode, Iscah took my slot to summarize parashat Naso.

**Jaz:** G-d says “Take their heads” but means “take a census!” They count between 30-50 feral Levites — I mean, they count Levites between the ages of 30 and 50, (*Lulav laughs*) sorted by ancestral house and each gets a special mishkan job. Quick reminders to remove anybody who might be contagious from camp and to properly and publicly make up for it when you do something wrong, and then a brand new procedure is introduced to determine whether someone has been adulterous or their spouse is just being jealous, involving trial by hydration. (*Lulav laughs*) The laws of nazirites inform us that you get special status if you'd just take an oath to not drink wine or cut your hair. Then we get the origin story for the priestly blessing and then all the Levite families give the same donation sacrifice to the mishkan but at length and Moshe would go there and chat with G-d. Done.

**Iscah:** The Lord instructs Moses to take a census of various sub-clans of the Levites, including the Gershonites, and the Merarites, and instructs them on all the things that they each have to do for disassembling and carrying around the tabernacle, instructions for removing people with an eruption or discharge, previously covered in Leviticus, instructions for if a man has, quote, “a fit of jealousy,” end quote, and thinks that his wife is cheating on him, very specific instructions for the vow of the nazirite, and then, big long individual lists that repeat almost exactly 12 different times, all of the things given-- (*Lulav laughs*) –from various chieftains as offerings. And this is just over and over again, 12 times.

**Jaz:** Parashat Behaalotecha.

**Julia:** G-d talked about menorahs, and why the Levites are special. Makeup Passover for people who missed regular Passover is introduced. During all of this, the Israelites followed G-d's magic cloud. Moses' buddy Hobab wants to leave but Moses convinces him to stay. The people get hangry, so G-d sends a quail plague. (*Lulav laughs*) Some random Israelites start acting like prophets which Moses thinks is pretty great. After a confusing argument between Moses, Miriam and Aaron, G-d struck Miriam with tzaraath. The people wait for Miriam to heal before continuing their journey. Done.

**Jaz:** G-d told Aaron to make a menorah, and then some Levites got purified and got an age cutoff in their job description. Passover happened, but some people had touched dead bodies, so they got Second Passover (*Lulav laughs*) but for those who skipped First Passover just for fun, they got... excommunication! (*Lulav laughs*) A cloud, which was just a regular-looking cloud during the day and a cloud of fire at night, acted as a tour guide and showed people when to keep moving and when to chill. They made and blew cool silver trumpets, people marched out in order by family, and Moses would say a special incantation every time they started and stopped. The Israelite people became irritated by all the aimless wandering and wanted different food than the same thing they'd been eating for ages, all of which tasted like coriander. Moses asked G-d why he had to put up with this whining, and G-d was like, "They want meat? Let's give them meat." And G-d gave them so much meat they were heartily sick of it, and then a bunch of them died of sickness. Meanwhile (*Lulav laughs*) 70 elders were conferred, and two became prophets. Joshua was upset about this, because people named Josh can't be trusted (*Lulav laughs*) but Moses thinks it's rad, and everyone should be a prophet. Ironically, though, his siblings confront him, and maybe it's racism about his wife, but maybe they just want a power-sharing agreement as fellow prophets, and G-d has favoritism toward Moses as G-d's favorite prophet. G-d turns Miriam into a scalie (*Lulav laughs*) and Moses and Aaron say, "Oh no, this was not what we wanted!" But G-d makes Miriam wait a week before turning her back.

**Lulav:** Parashat Shelach.

**Jaz:** Twelve boy scouts went out to check the promised land (*Lulav laughs*) and had some good fruit there! (*Lulav is still laughing*) They were there for 40 days but when they came back 10 of them said, "We can't go to the land because we were so impressed by how big and strong and muscley those men were that we didn't know what to do with those strange feelings, and, anyway, nope, we can never go back there!" (*Lulav laughs*) And, everybody cried and wanted to die and G-d got impatient and said to Moshe "What is up with our people? Why are they like this?" and Moshe said "You gotta have patience! Also, even though they're saying they want to die, you can't actually kill them all; it'll look bad." So, G-d said "Okay but you'll be wandering in the desert for 40 years! Only your children will make it in!" Of the 12, Joshua and Caleb were fine but the ones who'd spread negativity died of plague, and people were like "Uh, okay, we'll go into the land! Right now!" and Moshe was like "That's not going to work guys!" and it did not work. (*Lulav chuckles*) So, G-d gives some more instructions about how they'll give sacrifices when they've done something wrong, uh, once they eventually get to eretz Yisrael, and then clarify via killing a dude that's doing something on sh— shabbat? Uh, and doing something on accident is different than doing something on purpose, and FINALLY yarn reminds [*timer goes off*] you to be a good person.

**Lulav:** Send out chieftains from all the houses to scout Canaan. Plus also we're changing the Ephraimites' name to Yehoshua. They're checking the inhabitants of the land for who will be easy to displace, but are also supposed to bring fruit back as proxy for the quality of the land. Everyone comes back after 40 days with some chungy grapes. The chieftains are like, "Man, there are a lot of people living in this very nice and bountiful land," to which Calev says, "Not a problem. We can displace 'em." And everyone responds, "Mmm, they're

stronger, though?" Normal, well-armed dudes become nephilim in their retelling, and all the people are like, "Ughh, this is our promised land? Guess I'll die." Moshe, Aharon, Yehoshua, and Calev, the political class of b'nei Yisrael, throw a tantrum, and reason that, if the people deserve it, the land will be theirs alone, because their god said so. Hashem wants, for the umpteenth time, to kill everyone, but Moshe appeals to its rep with the Egyptians. They compromise by making sure that, of the current Israelites, only Calev and, I guess, Yehoshua, will see the land. The spy chiefs who were lying die of plague, so everyone's like, "Okay, okay, we'll fight," and Moshe is like, "Not now, though," and they fight anyway and super lose. Hashem establishes what offerings should look like, for you and for the ger hagar, for you and ger will be alike in front of Hashem.

Make sure in the land that you dedicate the first of your bounty to Hashem, and that you have ways to make up for unwittingly doing wrong, and that you reject from the people who knowingly do wrong. Also, one time we stoned a dude, and also you should have tzitzit.

**Jaz:** Parashat Korach.

**Lulav:** A couple of people, including the Levite laymen and two Reuvenites get uppity and think they're entitled to the same communion with the Divine that the priests were given! Moshe gets dewy-eyed about the affront to his brother and challenges the 250 non-ringleaders to an incense contest. In the meantime, G-d makes an example of Korach, Dathan and Aviram by swallowing not only them but their whole uninvolved families straight into the earth. Then, kinda as an afterthought while everyone's already reeling, the 250 community leaders who had followed those three are consumed by fire. The people as a whole protest this so G-d strikes them with a plague that by the time Aharon and Moshe expiate the people, has killed over 100 gross of Isrealites. there's a staff test. Aharon wins of course, and the chapter closes out with a re-iteration that (*timer goes off*) the Levites have both a special charge and a special prohibition on owning things.

**Jaz:** Korach was angry about inequality and organized hundreds of people to protest. Moses used strike-breaking techniques to say that really, Korach just wanted more power for himself and they should have a contest. Dathan and Abiram, Korach's buddies, also wouldn't do what Moses said and in fact told him off for thinking he could just summon them whenever, because he'd gotten them into a rough situation and even if he'd gotten them into a good one, that wouldn't have given him carte blanche. So they had a big public competition with incense, and G-d appeared and was on Moses's and Aaron's side, threatening everyone else. Moses and Aaron said, "Oh no, stop threatening them!" But then Moses told everyone else to shun Korach. Dathan and Abiram were there with their whole families, kids included, and Moses said, "If I'm right, there'll be an earthquake now, and they'll all fall in!" There was, and the earth ate them. Then G-d burned up everyone else who had protested, and the priests hung up the metal they'd burned incense in as a warning not to divide the priests and their inherited authority ever again. But the Israelites super did not like that and began protesting again immediately. G-d sent a plague, and then Aaron did incense sacrifices that saved the people, apparently, this time? But a bunch of people still died. Then it was time for another staff measuring contest. (Lulav laughs) Each leader sent in a staff to represent their leadership, and Aaron's sprouted flowers, so he's

the truest leader, and they kept that up as a symbol too. Then G-d and Moses listed a bunch of special things only priests get, included tithes, but in return, they don't get any land. Done.

**Lulav:** Here's a joint parsha that isn't always joint! For this read-through, I split up Jaz's summary of Chukat-Balak and interwove it with my summaries of each. Here's parashat Chukat!

**Jaz:** Chukat: Smash cut to 38 years later, where they have wandered around and came back to exactly the same place. First, Moshe and Aharon get some ritual rules involving cows, corpses, and cleanliness. Then Miriam dies super unceremoniously. Then the people complain because they have rules but no water, so G-d tells Moshe to ask a stone for water but speak nicely and Moshe hits it instead because he's angry at the people, and G-d says because of that, Moshe can't enter the promised land. Moshe begs a lot of kings to let the Israelites through, and they do not. With king one, they go away, with king two, they destroy his whole city, and with king three, they take over and colonize it. Bards sing about the victories. Also, in the middle there G-d announces its time for Aharon to die and he goes on a mountain and dies, with great fanfare.

**Lulav:** V'yidaber Hashem el Moshe v'el Aharon, lémor: dead bodies make one ritually impure, though paradoxically you can maybe make soap from cow ashes? Anyway, when it comes to the bodies of dead humans, being around them confers a week-long impurity that requires intermediate washing. We swap back to story mode, where Miryam dies and is buried at Kadesh. Without everyone's favorite hot gay prophetess, the Israelites are (*winkingly*) thirsty, and complain endlessly about it. Moshe chastises them, even though Hashem says to be nice - while everyone does get water, Moshe also gets a lifetime ban from the Promisedland theme park for hitting the ornamental rocks.

The mythical descendants of Esau rebuff a request for right of passage, so the Israelites have to go elsewhere. In the meantime, Aharon dies on a mountain camping trip with his brother and son. A K'naanite king takes some captives in a raid, but is destroyed in retribution. Everyone kvetches about provisions again despite having plenty of manna, so they get plagued by venomous snakes, but then get better by looking at an apology statue.

♪ Come to Cheshbon: firmly built/and well-founded is ♪♪ the city the Israelites conquer when they are attacked trying to negotiate right of passage with the Emorites. Finally, they are preemptively attacked by Bashan. And...beat him up.

**Jaz:** Parashat Balak.

**Jaz:** Balak: The king of Moab hires a wizard-prophet named Balaam to try to curse the Israelites (*Lulav giggles*) and he's on a first-name basis with G-d, who says, "you can't do that!" but he tries really hard. G-d sends an angel and the donkey Balaam is riding on refuses to move, leading to centuries of jokes about hitting that ass (*Lulav laughs*), and then Balaam stands at three places to try to curse them and instead blesses them and prophecies doom for other people. The parsha ends with a bizarre story that's maybe about manipulated assimilation and maybe just about getting killed for intermarriage.



**Lulav:** Balak, king of Moav, is real spooked by the progress of the Israelites through the area. He asks Balaam to put a curse on them. But Balaam consults with Hashem and decides...that's a bad idea. Flamiroads the Ass-Spooking Angel shares her Jellicle name after Balaam decides that he'll go so the messengers will stop bothering him. Balak sends sacrifice after sacrifice with Balaam, but always the message is the same: "These people are blessed. Leave them alone." In his final prophecy, Balak gives a couple other messages about... Sorry, in his final prophecy, Balaam gives a couple other messages, about currently uninvolved nations and how they will fall against am Yisrael. Then there's a smash cut to a situation that commentators insist was engineered by Balaam, but texturally it is just that the Israelite men were singing the song "Shiksa Goddess" from *The Last Five Years*. (*Jaz groans*) Aharon's grandson, Pin'chas, was like, "Oh, there's one of them now," and stabbed both the dude and the local woman to death. Also, there was a plague, I guess?

**Jaz:** Parashat Pinchas.

**Lulav:** Last parsha ended with a gruesome murder, so we pick up with how it's good, actually! The Midianites are sentenced to defeat for the whole "enticement to worship Peor" thing. Before we do that, we gotta take stock of the remaining matot. We're reminded of Korach and have a sonless dude named Zelophehad pointed out to us. Note that the population has barely changed, but that Simeon has lost almost two-thirds of its people and Yosef's matot have switched order and size. The lots of land are to be apportioned randomly and evenly. Oh look, Zelophehad's daughters come up again! They inherit their father's share. Hashem tells Moshe "check out the cool land, and then die lol." Moshe makes sure that Yehoshua will inherit his leadership role, but it's gonna be shared with Eleazar to some extent. We're reminded of the sacrifices we gotta make on the regular, including for high holidays — Sukkot in particular burns through a LOT of bulls.

**Jaz:** G-d applauds Pinchas's murder of an interfaith couple, and Moses announces they're going to fight against the Midianites, because of Cosby the Midianite woman who dared to hook up with an Israelite. They muster and have a roll call by tribe and sub tribe, and we get very specific numbers for all of those people, a little over 600,000 fighting dudes. Then, they divide up how much land everyone's going to get back after the war, and five sisters--oh no, I forgot the first one's name. Uh... Mahl...Mahlah? Noah, Holglah, Milcah, and Tirzah--

**Lulav:** Oooh.

**Jaz:** --also get land, even though they're girls, because they don't have brothers, and they use this as a starting case law to figure out the rest of inheritance rules. Finally, we get a list of the sacrifices you do on the daily, at Rosh Chodesh, or on Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah,

Yom Kippur, and every single day of Sukkot. (*Lulav laughs*) You start with the most, and then sacrifice one fewer bowl each day, while the number of lambs and goats stay the same. There is so many animals dying in this parsha. Done.

**Lulav:** Parashat Matot-Masei.

**Jaz:** Vows happen and the gender binary makes everything unnecessarily complicated, (*Lulav giggles*) but also gives women an out? Then there's a battle and apparently the Midianites had five leaders? The Israelites win and have a bunch of people captive, and Moshe tells them to kill most everyone, except young virgin girls. Then some brief purifying of the deaths, then dividing up of the spoils of war, which includes lots of animals, a bunch of gold, and (*agitated sounding*) also people! Maybe those same captured people! The officers give up some gold, but the foot soldiers hold on to theirs. The Gadites and the Reubenites have a bunch of livestock, and they don't want to enter the land — they just wanna farm and shepherd. (*Lulav laughs*) Moshe argues, and finally says they can do it if they also contribute soldiers. Then, in the last parsha — the last one of Bamidbar! — there's a long travelogue of where they've been so far, followed by instructions to get rid of idols and the *heavy* implication that they're going to wipe out the current residents of the land.

40.

**Lulav:** Recap episode!! Moshe settles into his role as crotchety grandpa and starts the book with an abridged summary of how we got here — mostly focusing on how the Israelite people didn't keep the faith. We get new information about the path the people have been on, including explicitly naming Seir as Esau's land & Ar as Lot's land, now and in the future. The message here is that your cousins did genocide, so you should too! We fix a CinemaSin by saying that of course the shock troops are still employed, (*timer rings*) and end with a restatement of how cool Yehoshua bar Nun is.

41.

**Jaz:** Moshe recaps a bunch of stuff, anxiously giving a bunch of instructions before the people go off without him. He's clear — don't add or take away anything from what you've been told, just keep it and teach them to your children, and you'll be great, cuz Torah's great. Some of the reminders include: no idols, like, really, like maybe don't even draw pictures, because if you do you might end up in diaspora, and oh no. (*Lulav chuckles*) Also, some stuff here about how G-d is a faithful lover, I mean faithful divinity, who you can always come back to and is super cool, and is personally only into monogamy. Plus, the full ten commandments, word for word, and a note that they were spoken in fire. Also, we get a part of the Torah service and the Shema this week! Then a note that even though Jews are a teeny little group of people, that's what makes us special, (*timer rings*) because G-d likes an underdog.

42.

**Lulav:** Hey guess what -- if you're good you won't be sick or infertile! I'm sure that's borne out in reality and not a thing that has made people feel super bad throughout history. Destroy pitilessly all the people who are marked for genocide, cuz you can't lose with this god at your back! Fun fact though: y'all suck, and it's just that the other people you're slaughtering were significantly worse that justifies this. We zoom in on Moshe's experience of that whole calf incident, including the fact that he made the ark to carry the tablets down from the mountain. We get an exhortation to be less stiff-necked and befriend strangers, and are reminded that from the mere family of Yisrael came the star-numbered G-d-wrestling people. We are promised near-effortless agriculture, and repeat much of "V'ahavta." (*ringer rings*) Boom! (*laughs*)

43.

**Jaz:** We jump directly into G-d laying out the expectations and rules, with a quick reminder of monogamy and strong repeated exhortations to not even THINK of looking at those other gods, or checking out how other people have done things, because it's a slippery slope that could lead to child murder. (*Lulav laughs*) Plus, if someone's around sprou— if someone's around spouting prophecies, even if their prophecies come true, if they tell you to do something you know you're not supposed to, don't follow them. Then, food rules: you can eat meat but not blood, some birds, but not gross ones (also there is a misunderstanding about the nature of bats), (*Lulav chuckles*) you can eat fish but not other sea creatures, no insects, no things that just up and died on their own, or things that you're required to donate to the temple. Also you gotta take care of the people who don't own property, like priests and poor people, and your workers should be more like indentured servants than slaves, although they can stay with you forever if they so choose. We wrap it up with reminders of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Done.

44.

**Lulav:** Moshe messages magistrates: Appoint judges who will have no partiality and take no bribes - tzedek, tzedek tirdof. Also, only yonic imagery is allowed for Hashem's altars. Stone heathens who pretend to be part of the covenant, but only with evidence. Pass cases you're not sure about up the chain, then abide by the results. If you gotta have a king, make sure they 1) believe in the system, 2) don't have too complicated a polycule, 3) don't hoard wealth, and 4) aren't a horse girl. The only thing worse than a horse girl is a birdwatcher — no one is allowed to be that. Since we didn't want to get the bass-boosted words directly, we'll occasionally have prophets to channel Hashem's messages. Listen, sometimes manslaughter happens!! Make those cities. Um, don't do real estate fraud, and, moving onto pre-battle speeches, remind the soldiers that Adonai is on their side, and then do an estate-planning workshop, and round it out by calling them cowards. (*Jaz laughs*) Make sieges, not blitzkrieg — well, except when it comes to the soon-to-be dispossessed. Lastly for this particular parsha, if you find a random human corpse, do a ritual in the nearest city to feel like it's not your fault. (*ringer*)

45.

**Jaz:** This week, we get a bunch of new rules and some old rules, many of which are so horrifying that later rabbis took considerable time to re-define them so narrowly that they're

basically never applicable! (*Lulav chuckles*) This includes things about the death penalty, proper parenting and spousal relationships, and rape. But also, haircuts indicate a change in social identity, clothes are connected to gender expression, fairness is important, and everyone in the community needs to be fed, so you can't hoard stuff. However, the text does act like virginity is a thing (*ringer goes off*) creates the category of a mamzer, and repeats the somewhat self-defeating injunction to wipe out the name of Amalek.

46.

**Lulav:** Make sure that in the tithe year you give people 10 whole percent of your revenue. Poor people and priests gotta eat too! The learned elders tell us to build a Torah monument that would put Roy Moore to shame and we get yelled at at length by some Levites, including about the fact that we know it is in the Messianic age because Jewish bottoms still exist. (*Jaz laughs*) Moshe calls us stupid and then the parsha ends.

47.

**Jaz:** Moshe wraps up a dramatic monologue. He warns people that there will be consequences for their actions, and says that Torah is actually super close to you, all the time, super easy, and it's not like this very passage is going to be argued about and reinterpreted for hundreds of years, right? (*Lulav snorts*) So simple. Moshe tells everybody that he's going to die, gives final instructions to his successor because he's an anxious Jewish mother, tells the people, "You behaved like this when I was alive, so how much worse will you be when I'm dead? No, no, no, it's fine, I'll sit in the dark!" (*Lulav giggles*) because like any Jewish mother he can totally lay a guilt trip. Finally, (*ringer goes off*) he prepares to launch into his slam poem and leaves on a cliffhanger

48.

**Jaz:** The New Year starts, one of four but who's counting, and then we work really hard at becoming good people in ten days and then times up and you're either in the book of life or death but have to fast anyway, and then we celebrate wilderness by being in little booths that intentionally don't have ceilings so we can see the stars.

**Lulav:** Nice! I like all of that. Mine is; doo doo doo! It's the New Year. We eat sweet things and get awe'd, then comes the day where we have probably statistically done some bad stuff so have a whole day to promise to do better about it. Later there's a festival with huts and fronds.

49.

**Jaz:** A death bed poem did Moshe say, so his words the people would take away.

**Lulav:** Oh my G-d.

Jaz: He asked that his speech land like dew,/ Upon the hearts of every Jew! He said that G-d was our parent who gave birth to us,/ And took care and helped out when we made a fuss,/ That G-d was like an eagle with huge wings,/ Who flew us along and gave us the best of all things./ But the children of Israel, ungrateful, did what they wanted/ And G-d just felt so unbearably taunted./ So G-d almost left them to an awful fate,/ But other opponents would have credited the strength of *their* state./ And so G-d concluded, "I am the one!"/ And so the poem was over and Moshe's life done./ He went up to the top of a mountain named Nebo/ To view the land disallowed him laid out below./ He made a mistake when he was young,/ And now he was stuck no matter how bad it stung.

50.

**Lulav:** We get a blessing for all 12 ancestral houses, which if you imagine it as Hashem going down a line and shaking peoples hands, sounds something like this; Reuven, Yehuda, LEVI, HOW ARE YA? REMEMBER ALL THOSE TIMES YOU WERE A MENSCH? Benjamin. YOSEF MY BOY, LOOK HOW VIRAL YOU ARE! HOW ARE THE KINDELAH? Zebulin. Gad! Dan, Naphtali, Asher, glad you all are here today, which by the way would never have happened if I weren't so good at making you fight people. After zot habracha, we get zot hamavet. Moshe goes up near Jericho, looks upon the whole of the land and bites the anonymous dust despite how spry of a 120 year old he is. Pretty rad guy all told.

51.