

# PHILOTORAH

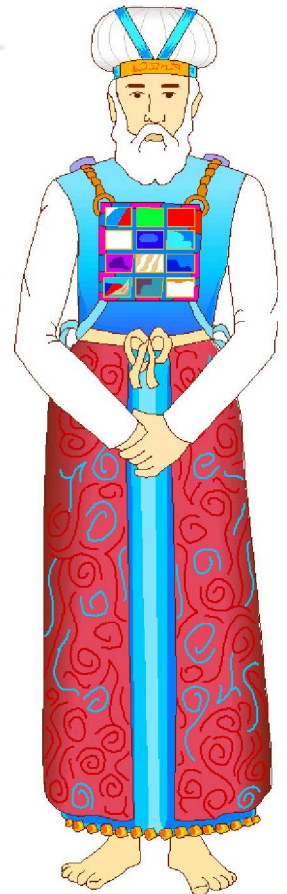
לה"י

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואי להי אבותינו שתשלח מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים, רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף לפצועי המלחמה, ולנפגעי מעשי טרור ואנטישמיות בישראל ובכל מקום שהם - עם שאר חולי ישראל. אמן.

May HaShem protect our soldiers; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima to the many injured; may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel; may He end these wars with total success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever we are.



אמר



## YERUSHALAYIM in/out times for EMOR

ט"ו אייר ה'תשפ"ו • May 1-2, '26

6:44PM PLAG 5:56PM • 7:59PM R' Tam 8:32PM

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales

PhiloTorah (304em) - 1 - all at once file

## KIDDUSH L'VANA

Minhag Yerushalayim is to say KL at the first opportunity, following three full days from the molad. The molad this month was early Friday morning, April 17th. This means that the first op for KL was Monday night, April 20th, after dark. Those who follow the seven-days- after-the-molad opinion, will have their first op on Motza'ei Shabbat, Acharei-K'doshim, April 25. Those who say Kiddush L'vana on Motza'ei Shabbat had their first op on that same night - Motza"Sh Parshat Acharei-K'doshim, April 25th. which means by now everyone should have said KL. If you have not, the last op is this Thursday night, Leil 14 Iyar, April 30th - all night. If one still hasn't said KL by then, the last op (not ideal, but no choice) is Friday night 'til 12:15am.

## Pesach Shenit

This coming Friday - Erev Shabbat Parshat Emor, is Pesach Shenit.

In the time of the Beit HaMikdash - past and future, people who were TAMEI or distant from Jerusalem or for whatever other reason they had (even intentional, spiteful) - and weren't part of CHAVURA for the Korban Pesach, were commanded to bring a Korban Pesach (Shenit) on the

14th of Iyar in the afternoon.

To commemorate that event, we mark Pesach Shenit by not saying Tachanun (some hold that you do).

Some have the minhag to eat matza on Pesach Shenit, because the Korban was eaten with matza and maror.

Some eat matza on the evening following Pesach Shenit (Friday night, this year), because the Pesach was eaten on the night following the bringing of the Korban.

Some make it a point to have matza on both the 14th of Iyar in the afternoon and on the eve of the 15th.

In addition to matching the eating of matza with Pesach Shenit, some explain the minhag to eat matza on this day because the original supply of matza, hastily baked as we were leaving Egypt a month earlier, ended. That makes 14 Iyar the end of the Pesach season, in a way. This was followed, in that first year we left Egypt, by three days of hunger and then the manna was given to us by HaShem on the 18th of Iyar - Lag BaOmer.

## A Takeaway from Pesach Shenit

The answer to those who expressed their disappointment in missing the opportunity to bring that first annual Korban Pesach in the Midbar because they were still Tamei on the 14th of Nisan, could have been met with -

Sorry, but KP is only brought on the 14th of Nisan in the afternoon. Anyone who misses it - for whatever reason - misses it. That's the way it works with Korbanot - AVAR YOMO... Its day passes, no extension.

If a person is sick on Yom Kippur and cannot fast and observe the day properly, there is no makeup.

If it rains the entire seven days of Sukkot, thus preventing the observance of the mitzva of dwelling in the Sukka, there is no makeup. That's how it is with time-related mitzvot.

The one noteworthy exception is Korban Pesach. It is a unique Torah-given second chance. Even one who was Tahor and in Jerusalem but refused to be part of Korban Pesach - a refusal that can carry the horrifying punishment of Kareit, is given a second chance to bring the KP and remove the death-sentence from his head.

True, Pesach Sheni is an exception to the rule. But it should remind us of something important. The concept of Second Chance. This is what T'shuva is - a second (and third and fourth...) chance to change for the better. The time-related mitzvot are exactly that - they come with time constraints. But the possibility and opportunity of T'shuva gives us that priceless Second Chance. It is there for the taking. Take it!

## EMOR

31st of 54 sedras;  
8th of 10 in Vayikra

Written on 215 lines (rank: 20th)

17 parshiyot; 11 open, 6 closed

124 p'sukim, rank: 15; 1st in Vayikra

Same as Sh'mot, but shorter in words & letters. Very close in number of lines; but number of parshiyot affects line-count because of the blank spaces between parshiyot.

1614 words, rank: 22; 2nd in Vayikra

6106 letters, rank: 23; 2nd in Vayikra

Relatively short p'sukim account for its drop in ranking for words & letters

## MITZVOT

63 of 613 mitzvot; 24 pos. 39 prohib.

Emor has more than one mitzva per two p'sukim, five times the Torah's average. Only Ki Teitzei (with 74) has more mitzvot than Emor. Only K'doshim and Ki Teitzei are more mitzva-dense.

## Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. **A**=ASEI; **L**=LAV (prohibition). **X:Y** is the perek & pasuk from which the mitzva comes.

## Kohen - First Aliya - 15 p'sukim - 21:1-15

*A kohein gets the first Aliya of every Torah reading. That's a given. But this particular first Aliya is so perfectly appropriate for a kohein.*

[**P> 21:1 (9)**] Following Parshat K'doshim, which focuses on the challenge to the individual Jew and the whole Jewish community to rise to higher levels of sanctification, Emor begins with the special sanctity of the kohein, and the even higher sanctity of the Kohein Gadol. These higher levels of k'dusha are concomitant with stricter rules of personal religious conduct.

A kohen is not to become ritually defiled by contact with a dead body [**263, L166 21:1**], except for his seven closest relatives: wife, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, and (unmarried) sister. This is more than permission; a kohen is required to participate in the funeral and burial of his close relatives, becoming Tamei [**264, A37 21:3**].

## MITZVAnotes

The Talmud teaches that from this

same source, mitzva 264, comes the requirement, incumbent upon all Jews (not just kohanim), to mourn one's seven close relatives. It is important to understand that this is NOT a case of rabbinic extension of Torah law or rabbinic legislation sanctioned by their obligation to "protect" Torah and mitzvot. This is more. This is part of the definition of the Torah's mitzva #264, as transmitted to us by the Oral Law from G-d to Moshe and to us via the Oral Law.

The Sages of the Talmud present us with two categories of Law - Torah Law, which includes the Written Word AND the Oral Law - which they transmit to us, and Rabbinic law - which they legislate. They not only teach us both, but they (most often) clearly differentiate between the two categories for us, so that we will know what is D'ORAITA and what is D'RABANAN, thereby neither adding to, nor detracting from, the Torah. Our commitment to G-d at Sinai includes careful adherence to Torah and Rabbinic Law (remember: the Torah requires us to listen to the rulings and teachings of the Sanhedrin - D'varim 17:11). But it is important for us to know the difference so that we will not have a distorted view of the Torah. (There are also practical distinctions between Biblical and Rabbinic law.)

Specifically, in the case of mourning,

the first day is Torah Law, the rest of Shiva is Rabbinic. Rabbinic, but inspired by the Torah. But that's not the same as Torah law itself.

**On another point...** Note the one difference - a kohein may become Tamei to his sister only if she is not married. Today, a kohein sits shiva for a married sister, but still has to maintain the practice of avoiding Tum'a. For a non-kohein, there is no distinction as to whether a person's sister is married or not. She is one of the 7 relatives for whom one mourns.

Kohanim (and all Jews) are forbidden to afflict the body in any way as a sign of grief.

**[This is an example, among many, of a mitzva that appears in a particular sedra, but is counted elsewhere. In other words, Emor has even more than the "official" count of 63 mitzvot.]**

Kohanim must be holy and avoid desecrating His Name, because they perform sacred service. This mitzva for the kohein is also taken to refer to the prohibition of doing Temple service after purification in a mikve, but before the (last) day of Tum'a has completely passed (i.e. stars-out) [265, L76 21:6]. Such a person is known as a T'VUL YOM. His complete purification only lacks time, not any act of his own.

A kohen may not marry a ZONA (a non-Jew and/or a Jewish women who

has had relations with a man who is forbidden to her) [266, L158 21:7], a CHALALA (the daughter of a kohen from a woman to whom he is forbidden because he is a kohen) [267, L159 21:7], nor a divorcee [268, L160 21:7].

Because of the sanctity invested in the kohen by HaShem, we are commanded to honor the kohen [269, A32 21:8]. Calling him to the Torah first is one form of this honor. So is having him lead Birkat HaZimun. And, we may not "use" a kohen to serve us.

[S> 21:10 (6)] The Kohen Gadol has even more restrictions because of his higher sanctity. He may not defile himself to any dead person (even his parents - the only exception is a body that has no one to tend to it. This is known as a MEIT MITZVA) [271, L168 21:11] nor enter under a roof with a dead body [270, L167 21:11]. The Kohen Gadol's sanctity derives from the anointing oil and/or the special garments he wears. He is to marry a woman who has not previously been married [272, A38 21:13]. He may not marry a widow [273, L161 21:14] nor any of the types of women that the regular kohen is forbidden to marry. He is further forbidden to have relations with a widow [274, L162 21:15], as this would contravene his sanctity.

The Kohen Gadol should (preferably) be smarter (better educated, wiser) than his fellow kohanim, bigger (taller), wealthier.

One of the Chassidic Masters gave a different spin to the phrase HAKOHEIN HAGADOL MEI'ECHAV (plain meaning is the Kohein who is greater than his brothers, viz. the KG). He said it is the Kohein whose greatness comes from his brothers (MEI'ECHAV), a Kohein respected and honored by his fellow kohanim.

## Levi - Second Aliya - 25 p'sukim - 21:16-22:16

[S> 21:16 (9)] A kohen with a disqualifying blemish may not serve in the Mikdash [275, L70 21:17]. The Torah next identifies many of the disqualifying blemishes. The rule applies not just to a permanent blemish or deformity, but even to temporary blemishes [276, L71 21:21]. A disqualified kohen may eat of the sacred foods (some but not all categories), but may not even enter the Mikdash [277, L69 21:23].

**Clarification:** A kohen BAAL MUM (with a disqualifying blemish) is barred from the area of the Mikdash from the (external) Altar and inward, but may enter the outer area of the courtyard of the Mikdash (of course, only when TAHOR), and may perform certain tasks.

[P> 22:1 (16)] Furthermore, a kohen who becomes TAMEI is temporarily barred from the Mikdash [278, L75 22:2], nor may he "approach" sacred foods. He may not eat T'ruma [279,

L136 22:4] or other "kodashim" while TAMEI from any of various sources. On the day of impurity (for the 1-day type) or on the last day (for the 7-day type), the kohen immerses in a mikve and, "with stars-out" that night, he once again becomes TAHOR and is allowed to eat T'ruma, et al.

Not only may one not eat non-kosher meat, it also renders a kohen TAMEI.

A non-kohen may not eat T'ruma [280, L133 22:10] (or other sacred foods specifically designated for kohanim). Jewish servants and laborers of a kohen may not partake of T'ruma [281, L134 22:10]. OTOH, an EVED K'NAANI who is considered part of the kohen's possessions, may eat from his master's T'ruma. An uncircumcised male may not eat T'ruma (even if he has valid medical reasons for being uncircumcised) [282, L135 22:10]. This rule is not expressly stated in the text, but is learned by "parallel texts" (G'ZEIRA SHAVA) from Korban Pesach. It is nonetheless one of the 613 mitzvot - noteworthy, in that it is a mitzva with no direct "chapter & verse" to point to.

A kohen's daughter (and any woman) who has relations with someone to whom she is forbidden, may no longer eat T'ruma [283, L137 22:12].

This mitzva also includes the situation of a kohen's daughter who marries a non-kohen (no sin implied). During her marriage, she may not eat T'ruma. If her husband dies or divorces her, she may return to her father's home and

eat T'ruma - if she does not have children. With children, the fear is she might feed them (her children who are NOT kohanim) from the T'ruma. Hence, she too is barred.

A person who inadvertently eats T'ruma must compensate the kohen by paying the value plus an amount which equals 1/5 of the payment. Eating TEVEL (produce from which none of the required separations was taken) is forbidden for all to eat [284, L153 22:15]. Violation constitutes a disgrace of the sacred.

**Clarification:** If a non-kohein unintentionally ate 100<sup>□</sup> worth of a kohein's T'ruma, he must compensate the kohein with 125<sup>□</sup>. This seems like his penalty is a fourth, not a fifth, since 25 is a fourth of 100. But look at it this way. His penalty payment, 25, is one fifth of the 125 that he pays. And that's the way the requirement of CHOMESH is calculated.

## Shlishi - Third Aliya - 17 p'sukim - 22:17-33

[P> 22:17 (9)] Animals offered as sacrifices must be blemish-free [285, A61 22:20]. It is forbidden to consecrate a blemished animal as a korban [286, L91 22:21]. It is also forbidden to make a blemish in a korban [287, L97 22:21]. Blemishes referred to are specifically defined by the Torah and Talmud. If a blemished animal is offered, it is additionally forbidden to

sprinkle its blood on the Mizbei'ach [288, L93 22:22], or to slaughter (as a korban) a defective animal [289, L92 22:22], nor to place any of the animal's parts on the Mizbei'ach to burn [290, L94 22:22].

Castration of animals is forbidden [291, L361 22:24]. (a serious, practical halachic issue related to house pets. Consult a Rav who knows these things for guidelines and guidance.)

A defective animal may not be offered as a korban, even if received from a non-Jew [292, L96 22:25].

*From this point through chapter 23, is the Torah reading for the first day of Sukkot (second day as well, outside of Israel) and the second day of Pesach (our first day of Chol HaMoed. Second day Yom Tov in Chutz LaAretz - got that?).*

[S> 22:26 (8)] A new-born animal stays with its mother for 7 days and only thereafter (from the 8th day on) may be used as a korban [293, A60 22:27].

It is forbidden to slaughter (as a korban or for personal use) an animal and its offspring on the same day [294, L101 22:28].

The Torah, once again reminds us that korbanot to be eaten have time limits which must not be exceeded.

**Note the previous two paragraphs. The first applies to korbanot; the second applies to all kosher animals.**

Until this point in the sedra, the Torah has dealt with the sacrificer (kohein) and the sacrificee (animals). It now changes gears and we find another meaning of the word sacrifice, as in being willing to die in sanctification of G-d's Name.

We may not desecrate G-d's Name [295, L63 22:32]; we must sanctify His Name [296, A9 22:32]. These mitzvot have many facets. A Jew is required to give up his life rather than violate one of the "big three": murder, idolatry, and incest/adultery. In times of "forced conversion", martyrdom is required even for the "least" violation. And there are other aspects of our behavior which fit into other categories of Kiddush/Chilul HaShem.

## R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 22 p'sukim - 23:1-22

[P> 23:1 (3)] Chapter 23 in Vayikra is the "Portion of the Holidays". It begins with the statement: "These are the Festivals..." Shabbat is presented as the first of the Holidays (we describe it so in Kiddush on Friday night when we say that Shabbat is in commemoration of the Exodus and is the first of the "days called Holy").

There is a different understanding of "six days... and on the 7th..." portion, attributed to the Vilna Gaon. This portion is NOT talking about Shabbat. It is a summary of the details about to be presented. There are six holy days

that some work is permitted, but on the seventh holy day, it is a Shabbat Shabbaton and all manner of Melacha is forbidden. The six days on which some Melacha is permitted are the first and seventh day of Pesach, the one day of Shavuot, the one day of Rosh HaShana, and the first and eighth day of Sukkot. Yom Kippur, of course, is the Shabbat of Shabbats referred to.

### Speaking of Shabbat Shabbaton...

This phrase occurs six times in the Torah. One time, it is referring to the Sh'mita year. Twice, it is talking about Yom Kippur. Twice it is referring to Shabbat - specifically, in context of the Mishkan. And then there is this one in Parshat HaMo'adim, which, we will say, goes half to Shabbat and half to Yom Kippur. Bottom line - Shabbat Shabbaton is an even split between the weekly Shabbat and Yom Kippur.

[P> 23:4 (5)] On the 14th day of Nissan, the Korban Pesach is brought. On the 15th, begins the Matza Festival (which we call Pesach), with the mitzva to eat matza during the seven days of the Chag. The first is a holy day with most forms of "melacha" forbidden [297, 298; A159, L323 23:7].

In each case of a Yom Tov, there is a positive command to abstain from "melacha", and a prohibition against doing "melacha".

Korban Musaf is to be brought on each

of the 7 days of Pesach [299, A43 23:8]. The seventh day is Yom Tov (with its twin mitzvot concerning melacha [300, 301; A160, L324 23:8]).

[P> 23:9 (6)] Following the first day of Pesach, the Omer (barley-offering) is brought [302, A44 23:10]. Special korbanot are offered on the day of the Omer. One may not eat different forms of new grains until the bringing of the Omer [303, 304, 305; L189, L190, L191 23:14].

[S> 23:15 (8)] We are to count from the day of the bringing of the Omer a period of seven weeks - 49 days [306, A161 23:15]. We understand that Torah's 50 days, to mean "up to but not including" (because it also says seven full weeks, and 50 is not divisible by 7, but 49 is).

Following the 49th day, a special offering of two loaves from the new wheat is to be brought [307, A46 23:16]. This is on the holiday of Shavuot (although in this context, it is not named, giving it a strong status as the culmination of Pesach - elsewhere we find its name and character as its own holiday) which has "melacha" restrictions [308, 309; A162, L325 23:21]. This Aliya ends with the reminder of the gifts of the field that must be left for poor people.

Since PEI'A and LEKET were commanded in K'doshim (which makes it strange to be repeated so soon in the Torah), we can learn from this

'reminder' of the gifts to the poor that one should be careful to include the poor and less fortunate in one's preparation for Simchat Yom Tov. It follows that one should give extra Tzedaka before a Chag so poor people will be able to have Simchat Yom Tov, too.

## Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 10 p'sukim - 23:23-32

[P> 23:23 (3)] The first day of the 7th month (Tishrei) is holy (Rosh HaShana), "melacha" being forbidden [310, 311; A163, L326 23:24,25]. Special Musaf sacrifices are brought [312, A47 23:25], in addition to the Rosh Chodesh Musaf. Note that Shofar is not counted here, but in Parshat Pinchas. Here Rosh HaShana is referred to as ZICHRON T'RU'A, a remembrance of the T'ru'a. (We use the term ZICHRON T'RU'A to refer to the day when it coincides with Shabbat, in which case we do NOT blow the Shofar.) In Pinchas, the Torah tells us to have a "T'ru'a day" - that is the command to hear Shofar-blowing [405, A170].

[P> 23:26 (7)] The tenth of Tishrei is Yom Kippur. One must fast [313, A164 23:27]. There is a Korban Musaf to be brought on Yom Kippur [314, A48 23:27], (in addition to the Yom Kippur service described in Parshat Achrei). Purposely eating or drinking (without a valid excuse) is punishable by excision (death and more, from

Heaven). ALL "melacha" is forbidden [315, L329 23:28], as are eating and drinking on Yom Kippur [316, L196 23:29]. We must abstain from all Shabbat-like "melacha" on Yom Kippur [317, A165 23:32].

Notice once again that both aspects of Yom Kippur - fasting and no melacha - are each two mitzvot - a positive and a prohibition.

## Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 12 p'sukim - 23:33-44

[P> 23:33 (12)] The 15th of Tishrei is Sukkot, a 7-day holiday. M'LECHET AVODA, (referring to most of the Shabbat restrictions, with the well-known Yom Tov exceptions) is forbidden on its first day [318, 319; A166, L327 23:35]. Musaf sacrifices are to be brought on each of the 7 days [320, A50 23:36]. The eighth day (sometimes Shmini Atzeret, a.k.a. Simchat Torah, is viewed as its own holiday; sometimes as the 8th day of Sukkot) is also a Yom Tov [321, 322; A167, L328 23:36] with a korban musaf of its own [323, A51 23:36].

These are the Holidays, besides the Shabbatot of the year and other offerings to the Beit HaMikdash. It is at the harvest time in the fall that Sukkot is to be celebrated.

On the first day we are required to take the four species (lulav, etrog, hadasim, aravot) [324, A169 23:40].

The Torah requires the Four Species on the first day of Sukkot. In the Beit HaMikdash, the mitzva was to be observed on all seven days of the Chag. After the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, the Sanhedrin ruled that we do the mitzva of the ARBAA MINIM throughout the Chag (with the exception of Shabbat) - ZEICHER L'MIKDASH.

During the seven days of the holiday of Sukkot, we are to dwell in sukkot [325, A168 23:42]. This is in order to instruct all generations about the aftermath of the Exodus when we were privileged to Divine protection in the wilderness.

## Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 23 p'sukim - 24:1-23

[P> 24:1 (4)] G-d tells Moshe to command the people to prepare pure virgin olive oil (EVOO) for lighting the Menorah, always. The lamps of the Menorah burned through each and every night, right outside the dividing curtain (Parochet) between the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies.

The juxtaposition of the Festivals and the lighting of the Menora is taken as a hint (REMEZ) to Chanuka from the Torah. What even makes the point stronger is the Torah's stress on the concept that the lights of the Menora are constant, eternal, through the generations. The Menora of the Beit HaMikdash has not made it through

the generations. (We, of course look forward to its being lit daily in the third Beit HaMikdash, but it's been a long time since it was lit.) The Chanuka lights have made it through the generations and continue to do so! Note too that the Kohen lights the Menora in the Beit HaMikdash and the kohanim (Bnei Chashmona'im) were the ones responsible for the relighting of the Menora and for the resultant mitzva of lighting the Chanuka Menora, from then and for all times.

[P> 24:5 (5)] We are also to take fine flour and bake 12 loaves (matza rules) which are placed on the Shulchan in the Mikdash. This too was a permanent fixture in the Beit HaMikdash. The loaves were exchanged weekly, on Shabbat (having been baked on Friday, unless it was a Yom Tov - then the baking was on Erev Yom Tov). The kohanim on duty would share the loaves that were replaced by the new ones. This mitzva was counted back in Parshat T'ruma, when the Shulchan was first described.

[S> 24:10 (3)] In an abrupt change of subjects, the Torah next tells us of the son of a Jewess and an Egyptian who "blessed" G-d's name. He was incarcerated pending word from G-d on how to punish him. The command was to stone him to death. This is to be the punishment for "blessing G-d".

So too, murder is a capital offense.

Killing an animal requires compensation to the owner.

Causing injury to a person requires compensation based on factors resulting from the injury.

The execution of the "curser" was carried out, as commanded by G-d through Moshe.

The three last p'sukim are repeated for the Maftir.

## Haftara - 17 p'sukim - Yechezkeil 44:15-31

Yechezkeil, himself a kohen, whose early days were spent in the Beit HaMikdash, prophesies the rebuilding of the Mikdash and the restoration of the active kehuna. He reiterates many of the rules of the kohen, many of which are presented in Parshat Emor. Interestingly, some of his rules are stricter than required by Torah law, but suited the conditions of his time. Yechezkeil restates the marriages permitted and forbidden to a kohen. He says that a kohen cannot marry a divorcee (true) nor a widow (not so; only the K.G. may not marry a widow). But he adds that a kohen may marry a widow of a kohen. Apparently, by not allowing a kohen of the time to marry a widow of a non-kohen, the community would take care of its widows in a better way. To apply the halachic details to the future, on a permanent basis is problematic in light of the immutability of the Torah. But they

can be considered "for the moment" or possibly they could be considered chumrot.

In addition to the obvious Kohein, Beit HaMikdash, Tum'a-Tahara connections between sedra and haftara, there is another connection. The haftara charges kohanim with teaching the people and clarifying for them G-d's laws. Specific mention is made of the laws of the Holidays and Shabbat - which is a major part of the sedra.

## Bringing the Prophets to Life

**Weekly insights into the Haftara by Rabbi Nachman (Neil) Winkler**

*Author of Bringing the Prophets to Life (Gefen Publ.)*

## Kohanim and B'nei Aharon

**EMOR - 17 p'sukim  
- Yechezkeil 44:15-31**

Chazal's haftara selection for this parasha is taken from Sefer Yechezkel [44:15-31] which is part of the closing section of the sefer. That section includes nine p'rakim [40-48] of visions that describe the future of the Beit HaMikdash, Yerushalayim and Eretz Yisra'el. Many of the past articles regarding this haftara have focused upon the contrasts - even conflicts - between the rituals that, as Yechezkel promises, would be

followed by the kohanim in the future Beit HaMikdash and those well-known practices that are instituted in the Torah itself.

And yet, we would have a better understanding of the entire nevu'a were we to comprehend the introduction of the haftarah itself. The opening expression V'HAKOHANIM HALVIYIM presents us with a number of queries:

- Does Yechezkel refer to the Kohanim or the Leviyim?
- Or does he speak of both?
- And, if he IS referring to the Kohanim alone - why call them HAKOHANIM HALVIYIM?
- Are not ALL Kohanim also L'viyim - being part of Shevet Levi?

Indeed, the earlier part of the navi's message does speak of the Levites alone... and not positively at all. And, upon hearing Yechezkel's message to them, we will realize why our haftara begins as it does. The navi tells the L'viyim that:

- They are idolators [v. 10]
- Nonetheless, they will guard the Temple, tend gates of the Mikdash and serve the Israelites offerings. [v. 11]
- But they will not be allowed to serve Hashem directly nor have any role in the sanctuary itself. [v.13]

Having condemned the Levites for their past sins - including idolatry - and, as a result, had them prohibited from fully returning to serving G-d, Yechezkel then turns to the Kohanim. The prophet would now call them Kohanim L'viyim - those Kohanim who were also L'viyim - who would be considered as an exception from the other Levitical families.

Indeed, we note carefully how the honors to be bequeathed upon these Kohanim would not be given to all of the kohanic families, but to the most faithful alone, B'NEI TZADOK, the descendants of Tzadok. It is they who the navi depicts as remaining loyal to G-d when the majority of the nation - both Israelites and Levites - strayed away from Hashem [v.15].

And so, what connection does this have to our Torah reading, a parasha that delineates the responsibilities and services that the Kohanim must fulfill in the Mikdash?

I submit that the underlying message of Yechezkel HaNavi is one that rings true in his era and in future generations as well and is subtly intimated in Parashat Emor.

In delineating the multiple mitzvot incumbent upon the Kohanim, i.e. avoiding defilement to the dead, choosing proper marriage mates or limiting certain kohanim from sacrificial worship, the Torah opens

our parasha by referring to the Kohanim as B'NEI AHARON. This additional designation seems to be quite unnecessary, as ALL kohanim must be B'NEI AHARON! But, perhaps, Hashem is directing Moshe to remind the descendants of Aharon must always carry on the name of their holy forefather. Their biological connection to the kehuna would not always guarantee their sanctified position or service alone. As kohanim, they must constantly be aware that they are B'NEI AHARON and, therefore, are expected to reflect his sanctity and greatness. If not... well, just read the warnings of Yechezkel!

Z'CHUT AVOT, the righteousness of our holy patriarchs does not guarantee that we will receive Hashem's benevolence and compassion... unless we remember WHO we come from and whom, therefore, we must emulate. ✨



*The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests*

## ACHAREI - K'DOSHIM

### • Two Unexplaineds

The angry kid is for the prohibition of hating a fellow in one's heart. Anger and hatred are very much connected.

And L'HAVDIL, there is a picture of the Chafetz Chayim, a great gadol associated with Sh'mirat HaLashon, from the prohibition of R'chilut and Lashon HaRa in K'doshim.

## EMOR



Let's start with the Kohen Gadol, the representative of Kohanim G'dolim and all kohanim - the topics of the start of the sedra. <> overly bushy eyebrows is one of the MUMIM that prevents a kohein from doing Avoda in the Beit HaMikdash <> a broken leg is a temporary MUM for a kohein; when it heals, he can return to Avoda <> the lamb has different colored eyes. This is considered to be a MUM, invalidating an animal from being a

korban <> the Torah reading for the first day of Sukkot and the second day of Pesach deals mostly with the Chagim. It starts, however, with the prohibition of taking an animal from its mother until at least its 8th day. Assuming that animals are happy and proud to be korbanot to HaShem, the cake with an 8 is celebratory for the newborn <> the pasuk that starts this section states: SHOR O KESEV O EIZ, KI YIVALEID... Top of the ParshaPix from the left reads, SHOR (the Zodiac sign for Taurus, the Bull), o, the sign for Aries, the ram, o, the sign for capricorn, the goat <> the next pasuk forbids the slaughter of an animal and its offspring on the same day. There is a pic of a sheep and its lamb. This prohibition is called OTO V'ET B'NO <> the picture of Nemo and his father Marlin also represent OTO V'ET B'NO, even though the mitzva does not apply to fish, nor to a male parent <> next comes the MO'ADIM, the holydays: Shabbat heads the list - the candlesticks (they are also for Yom Tov) <> then the matzot for the holiday of the same name <> then the mitzva to count the Omer <> and then the SH'TEI HALECHEM, the Two Loaves of Shavuot <> the Shofar is for Rosh HaShana and the scales are for Yom Kippur <> followed by the two major mitzvot of Sukkot <> right after the portion of the Festivals comes the command to take pure olive oil for the Menora; this is considered a

REMEZ to Chanuka from the Torah - hence, the Chanukiya <> the lighting of the Menora is referred to as being a NER TAMID, an eternal flame, commemorated by the NER TAMID in shul <> one of the mitzvot that is counted separately for each holy day is the korban musaf - the arrow is pointing to Bullwinkle's nose, which is a MOOSE-AF (no groaning, please) <> At the bottom is an oar with an M on it - EMOR <> the fraction is made up of a fraction (.016) under a fraction (.8) - that's SHEVER TACHAT SHEVER <> The fraction equals 50, as in TISP'RU CHAMISHIM YOM, up to, but not including 50 <> an eye under the eye of a needle, giving us AYIN TACHAT AYIN <> the bones are for the 5 times the word ETZEM occurs in Emor; once AD ETZEM, and four times B'ETZEM <> The wave is for the waiving of the Omer offering and the Sh'tei HaLechem <> the word FLESH with a white scratch through it is for UVIVSARAM LO YISR'TU SARATET <> the bottle (of liquor) is labeled 750ml and 25.4oz. That is named a fifth (of a gallon). the penalty of a CHOMESH, literally, a fifth, is actually a fourth (a.k.a. a quarter), because when a fourth is added as a penalty to the principle amount, it (the 25%) is a fifth of the whole payment - hence, a fifth = a quarter <> an Unexplained and a riddle

לע"נ  
 הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל  
 Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

## Faith as a Journey

### EMOR

In its account of the festivals of the Jewish year, this week's parsha contains the following statement:

**For seven days you shall live in huts [succot]. All those native-born in Israel must live in huts, so that future generations may know that I had the Israelites live in huts when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God." (Vayikra 23:42-43)**

What precisely this means was the subject of disagreement between two great teachers of the Mishnaic era, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva. According to the Talmud Bavli (Succah 11a), Rabbi Eliezer holds that the reference is to the Clouds of Glory that accompanied the Israelites on their journey through the desert. Rabbi Akiva maintains that the verse is to be understood literally (succot mamash). It means "huts" - no more, no less.

A similar difference of opinion exists between the great medieval Jewish commentators. Rashi and Ramban favour the "Clouds of Glory" interpretation. Ramban cites as proof the prophecy of Yishayahu concerning

the end of days:

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain. (Yishayahu 4:5-6)

Here the word *succah* clearly refers not to a natural but to a miraculous protection.

Ibn Ezra and Rashbam, however, favour the literal interpretation. Rashbam explains as follows: the festival of Succot, when the harvest was complete and the people were surrounded by the blessings of the land, was the time to remind them of how they came to be there. The Israelites would relive the wilderness years during which they had no permanent home. They would then feel a sense of gratitude to God for bringing them to the land. Rashbam's prooftext is Moshe's speech in D'varim 8:

And when you eat and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you. Take care not to forget the Lord your God...

Otherwise, when you have eaten and been satisfied, and have built fine houses and lived in them, when your

herds and flocks have grown abundant, and your silver and gold is abundant, and all that you have has grown abundant, your heart may become proud, forgetting the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, the house of slaves... you might be tempted to say to yourself, 'My power, the strength of my own hand, have brought me this great wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the power to do great things, upholding the covenant that He swore to your ancestors, as He is doing on this day. (D'varim 8:10-18)

According to Rashbam, Succot (like Pesach) is a reminder of the humble origins of the Jewish people, a powerful antidote to the risks of affluence. That is one of the overarching themes of Moshe's speeches in the book of D'varim and a mark of his greatness as a leader. The real challenge to the Jewish people, he warned, was not the dangers they faced in the wilderness, but the opposite, the sense of wellbeing and security they would have once they settled the land. The irony - and it has happened many times in the history of nations - is that people remember God in times of distress but forget Him in times of plenty. That is when cultures become decadent and begin to decline.

A question, however, remains. According to the view that the succot

are to be understood literally as huts in the wilderness, what miracle does the festival of Succot represent? Pesach celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt with signs and wonders. Shavuot recalls the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the only time in history when an entire people experienced an unmediated revelation of God. On the "Clouds of Glory" interpretation, Succot fits this scheme. It recalls the miracles in the wilderness, the forty years during which they ate manna from heaven, drank water from a rock, and were led by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. (In 1776, Thomas Jefferson chose this image as his design for the Great Seal of the United States.) But on the view that the succah is not a symbol but a fact - a hut, a booth, nothing more - what miracle does it represent? There is nothing exceptional in living in a portable home if you are a nomadic group living in the Sinai desert. It is what Bedouin do to this day. Where then is the miracle?

A surprising and lovely answer is given by the Prophet Yirmiyahu:

Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

"I remember the devotion of your youth, how - as a bride - you loved Me and followed Me through the desert, through a land not sown." (Yirmiyahu 2:2)

Throughout Tanach, most of the references to the wilderness years focus on the graciousness of God and the ingratitude of the people: their quarrels and complaints, their constant inconstancy. Jeremiah does the opposite. To be sure, there were bad things about those years, but against them stands the simple fact that the Israelites had the faith and courage to embark on a journey through an unknown land, fraught with danger, and sustained only by their trust in God. They were like Sara who accompanied Avraham on his journey, leaving "his land, birthplace and father's house" behind. They were like Tzipora who went with Moshe on his risk-laden mission to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. There is a faith that is like love; there is a love that calls for faith. That is what the Israelites showed in leaving a land where they had lived for 210 years and travelling out into the desert, "a land not sown", not knowing what would befall them on the way, but trusting in God to bring them to their destination.

Perhaps it took Rabbi Akiva, the great lover of Israel, to see that what was truly remarkable about the wilderness years was not that the Israelites were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory but that they were an entire nation without a home or houses; they were like nomads without a place of refuge. Exposed to the

elements, at risk from any surprise attack, they nonetheless continued on their journey in the faith that God would not desert them.

To a remarkable degree, Succot came to symbolise not just the forty years in the wilderness but also two thousand years of exile. Following the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews were scattered throughout the world. Almost nowhere did they have rights. Nowhere could they consider themselves at home. Wherever they were, they were there on sufferance, dependent on a ruler's whim. At any moment without forewarning they could be expelled, as they were from England in 1290, from Vienna in 1421, Cologne, 1424, Bavaria 1442, Perugia, Vicenza, Parma and Milan in the 1480s, and most famously from Spain in 1492. These expulsions gave rise to the Christian myth of "the wandering Jew" - conveniently ignoring the fact that it was Christians who imposed this fate on them. Yet even they were often awestruck by the fact that - despite everything - Jews did not give up their faith when (in Yehuda HaLevi's phrase) "with a word lightly spoken" they could have converted to the dominant faith and put an end to their sufferings.

Succot is the festival of a people for whom, for twenty centuries, every house was a mere temporary dwelling, every stop no more than a

pause in a long journey. I find it deeply moving that Jewish tradition called this time Z'MAN SIMCHA-TEINU, "the season of our joy". That, surely, is the greatness of the Jewish spirit that, with no protection other than their faith in God, Jews were able to celebrate in the midst of suffering and affirm life in the full knowledge of its risk and uncertainty. That is the faith of a remarkable nation.

R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev once explained why the festival of Nissan has two names, Pesach and Chag haMatzot. The name Pesach represents the greatness of God who "passed over" the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. The name Chag HaMatzot represents the greatness of the Israelites who were willing to follow God into the wilderness without provisions. In the Torah, God calls the festival Chag HaMatzot in praise of Israel. The Jewish people, however, called it Pesach to sing the praise of God. That, it seems, is the argument between R. Eliezer and R. Akiva about Succot. According to R. Eliezer, it represents God's miracle, the Clouds of Glory. According to R. Akiva, however, it represents the miracle of Israel - their willingness to continue the long journey to freedom, vulnerable and at great risk, led only by the call of God.

Why then, according to Rabbi Akiva, is Succot celebrated at harvest time?

The answer is in the very next verse of the prophecy of Yirmiyahu. After speaking of "the devotion of your youth, how - as a bride - you loved Me," the Prophet adds:

Israel is holy to God, the first fruit of His harvest. (2:3)

Just as, during Tishrei, the Israelites celebrated their harvest, so God celebrates His - a people who, whatever else their failings, have stayed loyal to Heaven's call for longer, and through a more arduous set of journeys, than any other people on Earth.

#### **Around the Shabbat Table:**

- (1) **Why do we need faith to embark upon a journey without knowing the destination?**
- (2) **As a people, do you think we turn to God more when times are hard or when things are working out? Is this lamentable?**
- (3) **How can sitting in a flimsy succah make us feel safe?**

## **Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH**

## **Message from the Haftara**

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## **A Kehuna Still Becoming**

### **EMOR**

The connection between Parshat Emor and its haftara is immediately apparent. Both texts center on the life of the kohen - his marriage, his conduct, his vestments, his relationship to ritual impurity and to Temple service. Yechezkel's vision of the Third Temple (Yechezkel 44) in the haftara mirrors the legislation of this parsha, especially Vayikra 21, in striking ways. Yet for the attentive reader, that mirror also distorts, as there are several discrepancies between the two texts. And surprisingly, it is that distortion that carries one of the haftara's most important messages for our own time.

The textual discrepancies are numerous. The Torah in Parshat Emor prohibits a kohen from marrying a divorcee (Vayikra 21:7). Yechezkel extends that prohibition to widows as well, permitting only the widow of another kohen as an exception (Yechezkel 44:22). Regarding ritual impurity, Vayikra 21:2 permits a kohen to become impure through attending burial services for his wife

and all first-degree relatives. Yet the corresponding passage in the haftara (Yechezkel 44:25) only lists a parent, a child, a brother, and an unmarried sister, and is silent about a wife. The implication is difficult to avoid: In the world of the Third Temple, a kohen would not be permitted to contract ritual impurity even for a married sister, and perhaps not even for his wife.

The differences continue. The Torah's kohanic vestments incorporate a weave of wool and linen – shaatnez – a prohibition waived only for the kohanim (Rambam, Mishneh Torah, K'lei HaMikdash 8:11). This exception has long drawn the attention of commentators. Yet Yechezkel describes kohanic vestments made only of linen (Yechezkel 44:17).

Across kohanic life – marriage, impurity, dress, and conduct – Yechezkel's Third Temple is simply more demanding than the Torah's own provisions. How are we to understand this?

The Talmud itself grapples with these apparent contradictions between Yechezkel's vision and the Torah's commandments. In more than one place (Shabbat 13b; Menachot 45a; Chagiga 13a), it records that the Sages considered removing Yechezkel from the Tanach – due to these tensions. What ultimately preserved it was the extraordinary effort of a single scholar: Chananya ben

Chizkiya, who secluded himself in his attic and labored by lamplight – sustained, the Gemara tells us, by three hundred jugs of oil – to reconcile the prophetic text with the Torah's commandments. Yet the Gemara never reveals how he resolved these contradictions, including those found in our haftara.

Several major commentators propose a compelling and illuminating approach: What Yechezkel describes is not a revision of the Torah, but a vision of its elevation. R' David Kimchi, (Radak, Yechezkel 44:21–22), identifies a heightened standard of kedusha that will characterize the Third Temple period. This is not abrogation; it is development, a deepening of holiness appropriate to a world that has itself grown spiritually.

R. Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Wisser, (Malbim, verse 17), frames the same idea in broader terms: As human beings deepen their capacity for spiritual engagement, the kohanim who serve as their representatives must rise accordingly. The external expressions of the kohen's role – whom he may marry, how he dresses, how he presents himself to the world – reflect the inner spiritual reality he is meant to embody. As the people ascend, so too must those who stand at their spiritual vanguard.

This is not a model of imposition from above, but of organic growth from

within. A society that rises spiritually will naturally demand more of those who lead it.

And here is where the haftara speaks beyond the kohanim to every one of us. In Jewish tradition, the kohen is not merely a Temple functionary; he is a representative of the nation's deepest aspirations. The Torah defined that calling at Sinai: MAMLECHET KOHANIM V'GOI KADOSH - "a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation" (Sh'mot 19:6). If the kohanim of the Third Temple are held to a higher standard, it is because the people they represent have themselves grown. The kohen's elevated kedusha becomes a mirror of the nation's spiritual journey, and an invitation to us all.

We live in a moment when the temptation is often to manage expectations downward - to ask less of ourselves and our communities in the name of pragmatism or accommodation. Yechezkel's vision, and the commentators who illuminate it, point in a different direction. The trajectory of Jewish life, as imagined by the prophets, is not toward diminishment but toward ascent. We are a people still becoming a kingdom of kohanim, and each generation is called to carry that becoming further forward. 🌱



**PhiloTorah D'var Torah**

## Omer Revisited

The Torah reading for the second day of Pesach is Parshat HaMo'adim, from this week's sedra of Emor. That was the first day of the Omer and reading in the Torah about the mitzva to count from that day until Shavuot, was perfect timing. This Shabbat is the 30th of the Omer and we read about the mitzva to count, again. So let's take the opportunity to revisit the Omer period - specifically, the mournful nature thereof.

Once upon a time - and IYH soon in the future, the Omer period was kind of joyous, something like Chol Ha-Mo'ed, the days between Pesach and the culmination of Pesach, namely Shavuot. It is clear from the flow of the holidays in Parshat Emor that Shavuot takes that role as the Atzeret of Pesach; in the sedra, Shavuot does not have a name of its own and never has a date identified with it - it is the 50th, culminating day of that which began on Pesach.

The count from the Exodus to Matan Torah - joyous. The count from the Barley Offering to the Two Loaves offering - joyous.

And then came the Churban. No Beit HaMikdash (temporarily, albeit a

sadly long temporary), no Omer HaT'nufa, no Mincha Chadasha - empty.

That emptiness has been partially filled with mourning the tragic deaths of 24,000 talmidim of Rabi Akiva. (and the Crusades).

Let's look at that the mourning aspect more closely.

First of all, most opinions are that the mournful aspect of the Omer period is only 33 days thereof. This has two main variations - from the beginning through Lag BaOmer or from Rosh Chodesh Iyar until Shavuot (with a break on Lag).

Second, unlike the Nine Days (and the Three Weeks) which is a period of Aveilut with several restrictions, the mournful Omer period (MOP) is noticeably lighter. Fewer restrictions and more exceptions to the restrictions. Marriages, no, but engagements are permitted. And if one went ahead and married during the MOP, he is not sanctioned for it. And the father, sandak, and mohel of a Brit during MOP are permitted to take haircuts and shave in honor of the Brit. And when Lag BaOmer is on Sunday, haircutting and shaving is permitted on Erev Shabbat, the 31st of the Omer.

Now look at the days of the whole Omer period. The first six days are Pesach. No mourning there. There are three days of Rosh Chodesh. Seven

Shabbatot. Pesach Sheni. Lag BaOmer. The three days before Shavuot. No Tachanun on the first 16 days of the Omer. Nor for the last five days of the Omer. Nor on Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh.

And in our time, let's not forget Yom HaAtzma'ut and Yom Yerushalayim.

And that's my point. The Omer period, once bright, became dark. But not black. Gray. And gray only for two-thirds of the time. And with bright spots even in those two-thirds.

Look at what many say right after counting: May the Merciful One restore to us the service of the Beit HaMikdash speedily in our time.

That colors even the gray with a bright future that is not just a dream and a hope - it is an ironclad promise from HKBH.

Add all that to our kavanot and perspective. **PTDT**

## *Walk through the Parsha*

with **Rabbi David Walk**



**EMOR**

## **The Shabbat Shuffle**

I love to bake! So, this week's Torah reading immediately interests me. Bread baking is front and center. We have the Mitzva of SHTEI HALECHEM

on Shavuot (Vayikra 23:18, and the only communal offering which was CHAMETZ). Then we have, one chapter later, the Mitzva of LECHEM HAPANIM. These were 12 loaves of bread, which were Kasher L'Pesach, and were placed every week on the 12 shelved table in the outer room of the Mishkan, and were eaten by the kohanim every Shabbat.

My favorite baking is CHALOT for Shabbat. It really adds to my ONEG SHABBAT (enjoyment) to consume my own CHALOT at our Shabbat meals. Generally, I have two CHALOT, which is pretty normal. This custom is based on the double portion of manna which fell every Friday during the 40 year trek through the desert. But once in a while I'm baking for a large crowd, and I make a pull apart Challah (also called 'tear and share'), which will always have 12 sections to it. Why 12?

There is a mystical custom in the writings of the ARI HaKodesh which demands that Jews have 12 Chalot at Shabbat meals, because we should recreate the 12 loaves of the Lechem HaPanim from the Beit HaMikdash. I've only been at a couple of Shabbat meals where this custom was observed, but I incorporate it into my pull apart Challah, and it's from this week's Parsha.

Many commentaries are curious about why the Lechem HaPanim

Mitzva is placed here, towards the end of the book of Vayikra, because it seems like it should have been presented back in Sh'mot when the intricate Table which held them was described. There are similar questions about the Mitzva of lighting the oil, which precedes it here, but let's stay focused on the Bread.

The Malbim suggests that the Mitzva appears here because it should be connected to the Mitzva of the Shte HaLechem listed with the holidays in the preceding chapter.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch insists that the Lechem HaPanim (and the frankincense powder sprinkled upon it) acts as a declaration before God, which states: Although God is Creator and Master of the entire world, and He is the Father and King of all humanity, which Shabbat teaches us, nevertheless, God has entrusted the Jewish nation to be God's trusted representative in this world. This role has become for Israel an eternal and unique covenant.

The 12 Loaves connect the 12-Tribe Nation of Israel to God in a unique bond. This same extraordinary connection is the topic of our festivals. The Torah calendar declares this distinctive relationship, and, so, too, the Jewish week. Therefore, we have this Mitzva directly after the chapter of the holidays. The CHAGIM and the Shabbat are two different declarations of the bond between God and Israel.

Cool! But it's the S'fat Emet who, I believe, best describes both the status of the Lechem HaPanim and its placement here in the Parsha of Emor. He begins by describing the unusual way in which the kohanim placed the loaves on this unique 12 shelved table.

The loaves were baked in casts which made them look U shaped when observed from the side. The kohanim would slide the new loaves onto their individual shelf while simultaneously slipping the previous week's loaf from its perch. This 'shuffling' of the loaves assured that there was not an instant that the shelf was bare.

Why? Because these loaves serve as testimony to the uninterrupted Divine flow of SHEFA (plenty, bounty) from Heaven to Earth. This SHEFA descends on Shabbat for the entirety of Creation. But it flows through US, the Jews, God's chosen People. That's why they are called PANIM ('face bread'), because God is always 'facing' us, paying attention to us and looking out for our needs.

Then the S'fat Emet explains why it is so imperative that the Lechem HaPanim be included in this week's Torah reading. There are three aspects, perhaps sources, for KEDUSHA (holiness). KEDUSHA can be found in human beings (ADAM), in specific places or things (MAKOM) and in specific times (ZMAN).

According to Rav Soloveitchik, this is why the angels declared: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts (Yeshayahu 6:3).

So, in this week's parsha, we have laws about holy people, namely kohanim. Then we have laws about holy times, chapter 23, the section of MO'ADIM. So, we now have laws about holy things, namely the oil lamps and the Lechem HaPanim.

The Rebbe then explains that these exceptional sources of KEDUSHA also appear in specific number patterns, because in Jewish thought numbers are distinctive and instructive. The Rebbe elucidates:

In the aspect of holy time there are:

1. Three pilgrimage festivals,
2. Sevedn days of the week,
3. Twelve new months.

In humanity:

1. Three Patriarchs,
2. Seven shepherds,
3. Twelve tribes.

And in place:

1. The Altar, Table, and Menorah,
2. Seven lamps,
3. Twelve loaves.

And, then the Rebbe concludes: God entrusted all this structure of divine

governance into the hands of Israel. Even now, though the Temple has been destroyed, through the Torah and our observing its Laws, it is still possible to draw down Divine flow of influence and blessing in holiness.

We, too, should, therefore, resolve that our actions and behavior patterns can also be conduits for Kedusha and Divine bounty descending into this realm. Therefore, be good and honest and kind to people. Also, make Shabbat and Chagim special and meaningful times. But, why not also find things which you can imbue with meaning and Kedusha? Like Challah! Get baking!



## Rav Kook Torah



by Rabbi Chanan Morrison -  
[www.ravkooktorah.com](http://www.ravkooktorah.com)

## Kohanim and the Illusion of Death

**Summary:** For the sake of the kohen's soul, he must distance and protect himself from death and its illusions.

God told Moshe, 'Speak to the kohanim, the descendants of Aharon. Let no [kohen] defile himself [by contact] with a dead soul among his people. (Vayikra 21:1)

Why are kohanim not allowed to come in contact with a dead body? Why does the Torah refer to the dead person as a "dead soul"? After all, it is the body that dies, not the soul!

## The Parable of Twin Brothers

In his book on mourning practices, Gesher HaChayim, Rabbi Tukachinsky used the following parable to explain the Jewish view on life after death:

Twin brothers, fetuses in their mother's womb, enjoyed a carefree life. Their world was dark and warm and protected. These twins were alike in all aspects but one. One brother was a 'believer': he believed in an afterlife, in a future reality much different from their current, miniature universe.

The second brother, however, was a skeptic. All he knew was the familiar world of the womb. Anything besides what he could feel and sense was only an illusion. The skeptic tried to talk some sense into his brother. He warned him to be realistic, but to no avail. His naive brother insisted on believing in an extraordinary world that exists after life in the womb, a world so immense and fantastic that it transcends their wildest dreams.

The months passed, and the fatal moment arrived. Labor began. The fetuses became aware of tremendous contractions and shifting in their little world.

The freethinker recognized that “this is it.” His short but pleasant life was about to end. He felt the forces pressuring him to go down, but fought against them. He knew that outside the womb, a cruel death awaited, with no protective sack and no umbilical cord. Suddenly, he realized that his naive brother was giving in to the forces around them. His brother was sinking lower!

“Don’t give up!” he cried, but his twin took no heed. “Where are you, my dear brother?”

He shuddered as he heard the screams from outside the womb. His poor brother had met his cruel fate. How naive he had been, with his foolish belief in a bigger, better world!

Then the skeptic felt the uterine muscles pushing him out, against his will, into the abyss. He screamed out ...

“Mazal Tov!” called out the doctor. “Two healthy baby boys!”

## **The Illusion of Death**

Rav Kook wrote:

Death is a false illusion; its defilement is due to its deceptive nature. What people call ‘death’ is in fact the intensification of life. Because man wallows in pettiness, he pictures this increase of life in a pained, black fashion, which he calls ‘death’.

The kohanim in their holiness are able to rise above this falsehood. Yet, falsehood and deception rule over the world. In order to overcome the illusion of death, the kohanim must limit their exposure to death. They need to protect themselves from those images that impress the soul with deceiving messages.

The word “soul” in the verse does not refer to soul of the dead person. It refers to the soul of the kohen. This is how the verse should be understood: “For the sake of the soul, the kohen shall not defile himself among his people” – for the sake of the kohen’s soul, he must distance and protect himself from death and its illusions.

*Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 207-209.  
Adapted from Orot HaKodesh vol. II, p.380*



by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

EMOR

## **When God Gets It Right**

The laws of the festivals form part of this week's sidra, including the law of Sukkot.

The building of the sukka is given a

historical explanation: "So that your generations may know that I made the Children of Israel dwell in booths (sukkot) when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Vayikra 23:43).

As God's providence preserved our ancestors in their flimsy dwellings in the wilderness, so does His protection enable us to survive the fragility of life in every generation.

There is an interesting question. Why do we blame God when things go wrong but fail to thank Him when things go well?

Human beings have always known the problem of evil, which asks how a good God can allow pain and suffering.

It is an especially pertinent question in the post-Holocaust era. Some have given up on God because they accuse Him of letting them down. Some, without realising there is a precedent in the Book of Iyov, speak of putting God on trial for what He did or failed to do.

But if there is a problem of evil, there is also a problem of good. If there is undeserved suffering and we accuse God over it, there is also undeserved goodness.

How can we take our blessings for granted and fail to admit that there are times when God gets it right?

If we are disturbed that there was so

much pain, suffering and martyrdom, should we not equally rejoice over the fact that the Jewish people, however attenuated, has come through, that Israel, however grievously assailed, has survived, and that Judaism, however misunderstood and maligned, has continued to flourish?

## **Making a Simcha of Sorrow**

The sidra begins on a sombre note with instructions to the kohanim as to how to act in time of sorrow.

Such things were always subjects of great concern to Judaism. Its pattern of mourning procedures is carefully worked out and psychologically wise.

What a pity it is that not everybody follows it to the full and allows it to lead us through the intense grief and back into life.

For example, saying you will not CUT K'RI'A denies you an important way of coming out with the grief.

Cutting the shiva short and keeping only one day denies you the solace of relatives and friends helping you to get through the first week.

Getting others to say Kaddish because you cannot pronounce the words denies you the privilege of personally saying what needs to be said.

Being too busy to say Kaddish for 11 months denies you the comfort of remembering your loved one in the context of the congregation; the small group of daily stalwarts really gives immense spiritual strength.

Beside these things there is the tendency to make a funeral or a shiva visit into a social occasion. Of course talking relieves the tension, but it should be restrained and dignified.

How can it be appropriate for a visit of condolence to be marked by joking and gossip, together with refreshments that make you think you have come, l'havdil, to a simcha?

A little common sense and you know you have done the right thing. -OZ

## Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

# Sedra Highlight

- Dr Jacob Solomon

### EMOR

*You shall dwell in sukkot for seven days. Every Israelite citizen shall dwell in sukkot. In order that your generations shall know that I caused the Israelites to live in sukkot when I took them out of Egypt... (23:42-43)*

The HaAmek Davar explains that these p'sukim communicate two messages. There is one message for

those living comfortably, and one message for the person living in poverty.

"Every Israelite citizen shall dwell in sukkot." The citizen, interprets the HaAmek Davar, is the insider, the recognized member within the community, and somebody who owns land. Remember that until recently, people were far more directly in touch with the land and its produce that we typically are today. And they were also more directly dependent on their lands, and the grains, fruits, and vegetables that their lands produced. Sukkot, the harvest festival (23:39), was the climax of the year (Sh'mot 23:16) That landowners had worked hard through the farmer's year, and had come a long way until its climax when he would gather in the highly profitable products of his hard work. It is at that time, at Sukkot, that he would need a reminder. For no residence and landownership is permanent, as the Jews were to learn throughout their history. G-d owns, we are His tenants. Material achievements do not last forever (perhaps this explains why we read Kohelet on Sukkot). This message is conveyed by the act of moving out of our permanent dwellings into the flimsy structure made out of the products that created the wealth, the agricultural products making up the s'chach. And more generally, and that extends to today: let not the comfort

of our affluence go to our heads.

"In order that your generations shall know that I caused the Israelites to live in sukkot when I took them out of Egypt". This, the HaAmek Davar explains, addresses the position of those who are not at the center, but at the margins of society. Those without possessions, those who struggle to keep going. Those who do not have permanent homes, but flimsy structures, akin to sukkot. Those whose poverty forces them to frequently migrate from place to place. They need to be reminded and reassured that, once upon a time, the whole of Am Yisrael was like that. They were not landowners and settled, established people when they emerged from slavery and left Egypt in a hurry. Yet they accepted their lot and despite they lack of permanence, they continued to enjoy G-d's providence from day to day in ways that they could never have predicted. And as in days of old where G-d helped them as they connected with Him, so, Sukkot conveys, He will help those who connect with Him no matter how impermanent and worrying their situation.

In addition, we may add, that Sukkot is the counterpart to Pesach. On Pesach, we all are required to see ourselves as though we came out of Egypt, saved from those who wish us harm. For, the Hagada tell us,

in every generation people want to destroy us, but it is G-d who saves us. As it was then, then it is now. We prove that as we are still here.

On Sukkot, farming society reaches harvest time with its annual bounty. That, together with land ownership convey wealth. These things must not go to our heads! We have to see ourselves as merely migrants and visitors in the Almighty's territory. For it is His wealth that He is allowing us to use. "For you are with Me as migrants and as visitors" (25:23). Whether the Sukkot of Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim that Am Yisrael lived in were the flimsy structures we all know, or whether they were the clouds of glory of the past, they both convey the same message. They are temporary; so is life, so are our possessions great and small. Make the most of where you are in line with what is right before being moved on to the next stage! By doing so, you link into what is permanent: G-d's plan as revealed in our sacred traditions. Wealth is entrusted to us in order to help us do our part in interacting within our environment as partners as His ongoing Creation.

And finally, let it be said that it is in the sukkah that all can meet. It is where no-one can feel over-secure in their possession, nor overawed by the other's wealth and their own hardships. 🌿🍷

## **Dvar Torah** by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

*Graciously shared with PhiloTorah*

### **EMOR**

The daily counting of the Omer carries us from the period of Pesach until Shavuot. The mitzva is mentioned in this week's parsha to count the time elapsed during this span of time. This connection transforms two distinct holidays and their corresponding historical events into one integrated redemption process. We should celebrate the freedom from Egypt while focusing on Shavuot and the Sinai Revelation. We need to recognize Shavuot and receiving the Torah as the culmination of Pesach.

The question is asked why is there no mention of the Exodus from Egypt or receiving the Torah in connection with counting the Omer? Instead, S'firat HaOmer seems just to enumerate the days from the korban Omer until the Korban of the Two Loaves, seven weeks later. Why did the Torah choose these grain offerings to establish the link between Pesach and Shavuot?

Ramban anchors the agricultural significance of the Holidays. In addition to the historical commemorations on each holiday, each Holiday also provides the opportunity to thank G-d for reaching a milestone in

the agricultural cycle. This may explain why our Parsha presents these offerings as seasonal imperatives, emphasizing that the Omer is brought at the time of the beginning of Spring and that the "Two loaves" are brought at the period of "First fruit".

Why the need for this bond between the Counting of the Omer, the agricultural cycle and the Holidays?

One may answer that the significance of the counting does lie in it joining the historic events of Pesach and Shavuot, alone. The Torah not only connects the holidays but also teaches us an important lesson. There is essence in the character of this connection. By noticing the means the Torah uses to present the mitzva of Counting the Omer, we realize that the historical process transcends us from Egypt to Sinai as naturally as the agricultural cycle itself. 🕯

## **The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

**EMOR 5785**

### **The Deeper Message of 'On the Morrow of the Sabbath'**

With reference to the Torah's discussion of the mitzva of Counting the Omer, there is a well-known question

raised by many. The verse begins: "You shall count for yourselves - from the morrow of the Sabbath ... seven weeks..." (Vayikra 23:15). Rashi (ad loc) quickly points out that when the Torah employs the word 'Sabbath' (in this context), it does not refer to Shabbat, but to Yom Tov. In other words, the counting of the 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot commences on the day after the first Yom Tov of Pesach and not after the weekly Shabbat. This understanding was the view of Chazal, the Perushim, who contended strenuously with their adversaries, the Tzidukim, who chose to understand the Sabbath of the pasuk in its literal sense - Saturday.

The question, however, remains. If the Sabbath of the verse refers to Yom Tov and not Shabbat, why did the Torah choose ambiguity over clarity and not simply state, "from the morrow of Pesach?" The Meshech Chochma offers this insightful explanation. (on Vayikra 23:21) Typically, Yom Tov is that festival which was created because of HaShem's special relationship with the Jewish people. Pesach - Gd liberated us; Shavuot - Gd gave us the Torah; Sukkot - Gd protected and cared for us in the desert. We played a critical role in each of the festivals. Therefore, it is Israel that sanctifies the Yom Tov. M'KADEISH YISRAEL V'HAZMANIM. Shabbat, on the other hand, which

commemorates Creation, is independent of the Jewish people. Thus, on Shabbat, only HaShem who sanctifies the day. M'KADEISH HASHABBAT. We do not control its holiness; we did not earn it. However, says R. Meir Simcha, Pesach, notwithstanding its Yom Tov designation, is most like Shabbat. If we did not merit Shabbat - it was a gift, so too on Pesach, we likewise did not deserve to be liberated. Had it not been for HaShem's act of supreme compassion and His pledge to our Forefathers, we would have slipped and descended into the bottomless pits of tuma, never to be redeemed. The Exodus was thus also an undeserved gift from Gd.

As such, according to the Meshech Chochma, when the Torah employs the word SHABBAT to refer to Pesach, both of these occasions have as their common feature of being a magnificent present bestowed upon us by the Almighty. With this insight, we can answer another question about the Omer. Why begin the counting on the morrow and not on the first day of Pesach? Of course, the simple answer might be that we generally avoid co-mingling two mitzvot, either to afford each mitzva its own moment of simcha (EIN M'ARVIN SIMCHA B'SIMCHA), or to give each mitzva its due significance (EIN OSIM MITZVOT CHAVILOT CHAVILOT).

However, Rav Nachman Brestlov, quoting his great-grandfather, the Ba'al Shem Tov, advances a fascinating observation which suggest a very different answer to the above question. Why is it, he wonders, that when a BA'AL T'SHUVA begins his path to a fuller Jewish life, the journey is always exciting and bright. His spiritual drive is full of passion, and his learning is sweet and pleasant. And then, with time, all of the enthusiasm and freshness begins to fade. The Torah study becomes increasingly difficult, and the performance of mitzvot, once so spiritually enthralling, now is so disappointingly routine and fraught with frustration. To simply dismiss this phenomenon as the result of behavioral habituation is a bit too simplistic when applied to mitzvot. For, after all, if the aim of every mitzva is to deepen our connection to HaShem, how can its increased practice result in diminishing returns? Why the more I do, the less I feel?

As Rabbi Breitowitz explains the Besht's insight: When a child learns to walk, the doting parent will support the child to prevent him from falling. But then, there comes that moment when the parent must let go and let the child walk on his own. Of course, the child will inevitably fall, but there is no other way for the child to learn. Now, if the child could verbalize his discomfort, he might

ask: "Why, just a little while ago, it was so easy and now it's so difficult? Have I regressed?" Obviously, the answer is that: "Up until now, your parent was there to help you; now, that you can see it's possible to walk, the rest is up to you."

When a Jew, once alienated from HaShem, feels a spiritual stirring to return to Him, HaShem, in His bountiful chesed, carries him, and the returnee experiences his religious t'shuva as something wonderful, smooth and sweet. As the prophet exclaims (Yirmiyahu 31:2) - 'From long ago, HaShem appeared to me; With everlasting love have I loved you; therefore have I drawn you to Me with loving-kindness.'

But then, at some point in that person's religious odyssey, it is as if HaShem says: "I've shown you how beautiful and meaningful Judaism is. It's time I put you down and let you go. Your job is to make it on your own. You have the capability and the wherewithal to advance further; it's all up to you. Of course, when that transition occurs, the Jew will experience many a setback and experience an annoying unease. He will typically face all sorts of obstacles in his turning to Gd - in his AVODAT HASHEM. However, none of this is a sign of failure, but rather a sign of Divine confidence. True, you're on your own, but HaShem

remains ever in the shadows; His kind hashgacha watching, and every now and then, mysteriously helping and proudly signaling that, "You're ready for the next step. What was before something unearned and artificial when I held you up, you must now internalize through your own struggles and achievements."

With this important observation, we can return to our question. The Ba'al HaTanya explains that on Pesach, there was a sudden intense revelation of godliness quite beyond what we were capable of appreciating. We were naked of mitzvot and were forced to leave Egypt hurriedly, B'CHIPAZON. We were neither ready nor deserving, and yet, at the Splitting of the Sea, even the simple maidservant experienced prophetic ecstasy. True, all this was necessary, but nevertheless, the spiritual high was artificial and unearned.

As the Sefer HaChinuch (Emor, Mitzva 273) states, the purpose of the Omer is for us to count the days and grow incrementally until the festival of Shavuot. The count does not begin on Pesach which, much like Shabbat, is all about the Almighty and, in the case of Pesach, His miraculous deliverance of His people. Rather, the morrow of Pesach/Shabbat is all about us! After the gift of redemption - after the Pesach/Shabbat event, after HaShem held us, supported us,

carried us - it is now our turn to begin the count, set out on the journey toward Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah. Someone once quipped: "What you are is what HaShem gives to you. What you do with what you are is your gift back to HaShem."

On the verse in Shir HaShirim (1:4) MOSHCHEINI... "Draw me, we will run after you, the king has brought me into his chambers", the S'fat Emet comments that MOSHCHEINI refers to Pesach and NARUTZA refers to the 7th of Pesach and counting of the Omer, all leading to HEVI'ANI HAMELECH CHADARAV, the holiday of Shavuot. Indeed, on Pesach, HaShem draws us close, and then MIMOCHORAT HASHABBAT, after that glorious first day of Yom Tov, we begin the arduous task of counting up, one day at a time, until we merit, with that heroic climb, the giving of the Torah. 🙌



## EMOR

**GM** There are a number of mitzvot about which we are taught that they are (in some way) equal to all the mitzvot of

the Torah - K'NEGED KOL HATORAH KULAH.

Without claiming that the following mitzvot are in that category, there is a Gimatriya Match that (numerically) points to being able to make that claim for the mitzvot of PEI'A and LEKET (mitzvot that provide for the poor, in this pasuk we find the prohibitions of cutting one's whole field and taking the gleanings for oneself) are K'NEGED KOL HATORAH KULAH. In the middle of Parshat HaMo'adim - the Portion of the Festivals (perek 23 of Vayikra, in Parshat Emor), we find a reminder of two mitzvot that were commanded in just the previous sedra of K'doshim - Vayikra 23:22 -

וּבְקַצְרְכֶם אֶת־קְצִיר אֲרֻצְכֶם לֹא־תִכְלֶה  
פֶּאת שְׂדֵךְ בְּקַצְרָהּ וּלְקַט קְצִירָהּ לֹא  
תִלְקֹט לְעַנִּי וּלְזָר תִּעַנּוּב אֹתָם  
אֲנִי יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

*When you reap your land's harvest, do not completely harvest the ends of your fields. [Also] do not pick up individual stalks that may have fallen. You must leave [all these] for the poor and the stranger. I am HaShem your God.*

The gimatriya of this pasuk is 5960. That's on the high side for gimatriya-match searches. Yet two other p'sukim in Tanach have that same numeric value. One of them is D'varim 28:1, in Parshat Ki Tavo -

וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָע בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִּי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם וּנְתַנָּה יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עִלְיוֹן עַל כָּל־גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ:

*If you obey HaShem your God, carefully keeping all His commandments as I am*

*prescribing them to you today, then God will make you highest of all the nations on earth.*

Numerically, the mitzvot of PEI'A and LEKET are linked to all the mitzvot of the Torah.

As far as GMs are concerned, this is a pretty good one. But in most cases of GMs that say something to me, I ignore the other p'sukim whose gimatriyas match - they simply do not add to the point (and sometimes actually detract). In this current case, we can look at the other pasuk that matches and include it in this GM. M'lachim Alef 8:49 -

וְאָתָּה תִּשְׁמָע הַשָּׁמַיִם מִכּוֹן שִׁבְתֶּךָ וְסִלּוּתָהּ וְעֲשִׂיתָ וְנָתַתָּ לְאִישׁ כְּכָל־דַּרְכּוֹ אֲשֶׁר תִּדְרַע אֶת־לִבּוֹ כִּי־אָתָּה יֹדְעֵת לְבַדְּךָ אֶת־לִבָּב כָּל־בְּנֵי הָאָדָם:

*And You shall hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart You know, for You, alone, know the hearts of all the children of men.*

This pasuk is part of a petition to HaShem to hear and accept of T'filot and forgive us... so that we may be able to keep all the mitzvot of the Torah.

Only these three p'sukim in all of Tanach have a gimatriya of 5960.

*USFUNEI T'MUNEI CHOL is the title of my book of Gimatriya Matches - IY"H and BE"H. The title translates to Hidden in the Sand. That's how I feel about my Gimatriya searches. Like walking along the beach with a metal detector. Beep-beep-beep. Lean down and find something. Usually, nothing of note. But sometimes you find something special.*

# RED ALERT!

EMOR

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)  
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -  
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)*

## DIVREI TORAH

- “Speak to the Kohanim and say to them...” (21:2). Why do we need the double verb, to speak and to say? Rashi states that the Torah is warning the Kohanim that they need to guard their children from contaminating their Kohanic status in the nation. The Chatam Sofer (early 19th century, Pressburg) added a novel approach, admitting, though, that it is not the literal meaning of the text. He stated that the Torah instructs the adults who are to wash the body of the deceased, preparing him for burial, to concern themselves with the minors, the children who are now orphans. This is novel and worthy of our attention, but it is not the literal interpretation of the text. The better meaning is to educate the children in the ways of Torah. If they are Kohanim, prepare them early on what their responsibilities will be as they get older. The same lesson is directed to the rest of the nation. Don't allow your children to become the “Shabbos Goy” in the family just because they are little!
- In the middle of the Parsha is the section describing the Biblical holi-

days as they appear during the year. But why does the Torah start the section with a reminder about Shabbat? Yes, Shabbat is a form of a Mo'ed, but Shabbat is different than a Yom Tov. A further big difference between the two is that Shabbat is a definite; it is not determined by us. It is determined by Hashem. Yom Tov is determined by us. The Torah identifies the date of each holiday, and we determine that date by establishing when Rosh Chodesh will be. The Vilna Gaon (18th century, Vilna) presents a novel interpretation: the Torah is talking about the holidays. There are seven days of Yom Tov in the year: one day of Rosh HaShana, one day of Yom Kippur, one day of Sukkot, one day of Shemini Atzeret, two days of Pesach, and one day of Shavuot. Six of these days are a legal day of Yom Tov, and the seventh day (Yom Kippur) is a Shabbat, where there are more restrictions than a Yom Tov. This adequately explains the opening paragraph of the section of the holidays.

- “These are my Holy Convocations” (23:2). You have to obey the prohibitions of the day in order to be considered Hashem's holidays. If you don't, then they are not religious holidays. When I was growing up in Washington, D.C. I met a girl whose parents used to celebrate Rosh HaShana by taking the family to a very nice picnic in the park. They did

not go to any synagogue, so the celebration was quite secular, even though the parents told their children that they were celebrating Rosh HaShana. As we see in this text, to be considered a religious holiday, there has to be religious components to the celebration. The holiday prohibitions and the positive rituals of each holiday give it a true Torah definition. And each holiday has part of the menu devoted to the particular Chag, be it an ordained item on the menu, like Matza, or be it a custom, like blintzes, or kreplach. Each holiday has a component that is reserved for Hashem, plus a component reserved for us. Enjoy.

- Why is there no B'racha of Shehecheyanu for the Mitzva of counting the Omer? The Rashba (13th century, Spain) wrote that the ultimate task for S'fira is bringing a sacrifice on Shavuot, and we are not (currently) attaining that goal. Therefore, there is no Shehecheyanu because S'fira reminds us that there is no Beit HaMikdash. And that is why we add a statement after each night's count asking Hashem to restore the Beit HaMikdash. During the times of the Temple, counting the S'fira was a Torah Mitzva. Today counting the Omer is a Rabbinical law. *(Ed. note: Rambam considers S'fira a Torah Law even in our time, without a Mikdash.)*
- When we count the Omer, the first day is "one day" and not the first day.

Some commentators claim that this was specifically mentioned to refute the position of the Sadducees who were of the opinion that the first day of the S'fira count was on Sunday. The Torah states that the count starts on "the day after the Shabbat" (23:15) (Menachot 65a). The word Shabbat normally means a Saturday, but it can apply to a holiday, since both days have restrictions placed upon us. The Rabbis claim that here the text must be referring to the first day of Pesach, deriving that from the text where we are talking about Pesach. And furthermore, the Torah doesn't define which Shabbat we would be talking about. This became a contentious issue between the Pharisees and the Sadducees in ancient times. (I find it very interesting that in the Christian religion, Easter is determined to be the first Sunday after the full moon. Hence it is always the Sunday that the Sadducees say we are to begin counting the Omer.)

- On Yom Kippur the Torah commands us to afflict our souls. The Rabbis identify five afflictions: eating and drinking, washing the body, anointing with oil, wearing leather shoes, and intimate relations. These are all means to an end, and not the end itself. We should obligate ourselves to Fast, Give Tzedaka, and to Repent. Unfortunately we often think that the goal of Yom Kippur is the

fasting, without seeing the ultimate goal of total penitence. Still we need to remind ourselves that Yom Kippur is a holiday. The joy of the day is experiencing the atonement that the day affords us. Each year we need to concentrate and re-make ourselves into better people. It is like my GPS system tells me when I make a wrong move: Re-calculating. We need to re-calculate ourselves and upgrade our commitment to Hashem and to ourselves as well. (In the Musaf of Yom Kippur, after the Kohen Gadol finishes the rituals of the day, he made a joyous occasion out of the day. This was because he felt the exhilaration of his difficult tasks of the day. The Machzor relates to us his celebration.)

- On Sukkot we are required to take the four species of vegetation to celebrate the harvests. I would ask where did they get these agricultural items in the desert, but that would not be completely fair. The upshot of this Parsha is not their experience in the desert; it is how Jewish life would be celebrated when the people would be living in the Promised Land. But we cannot take anything for granted. Today supplying the Jewish world with the four species has become a major industry. But that wasn't always so. There were times in Europe that Jewish communities could not get these agricultural gems. Or when we heard stories how an

entire community would be elated if they got one Lulav for all. How sad. Or stories in the Talmud when a person had to choose between praying with a community that had a minyan with no shofar or to pray with a Minyan-less community that had a shofar. We live in amazing times where we do take things for granted. We should constantly be aware of our circumstances and rejoice and count our blessings.

## Questions by RED

### From the text

1. May a Kohen be defiled for his unmarried sister who died? (21:3)
2. How many days of Yom Tov are there in the Torah? (23: 7-36)
3. When on the calendar are Pesach and Shavuot?
4. How many loaves of bread were on the Shulchan in the Mishkan? (24:5)
5. What punishment was given to the Jew who blasphemed the name of Hashem? (24:14)

### From Rashi

7. How do we honor a Kohen? (21:8)
8. If a daughter of a Kohen marries a ZAR she may not eat T'ruma. What's a ZAR? (23:12)
9. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day?

10. How is the Etrog unique in being a beautiful tree? (23:40)

### From the Rabbis

11. The Torah restricts the Kohen Gadol from leaving the Beit HaMikdash. (21:12). Where does he spend his day? (Rambam)

12. What is the message of the Shofar? (Rambam, Hilchot T'shuva 3:4)

13. Why does the Torah mention the lighting of the Menorah right after the section on the holidays? (RED)

### Midrash

14. The son of a Jewish woman and an Egyptian man fought with another Jew. What was the fight about?

### Haftara - Yechezkel

15. Name a law for the Kohanim in the days of the Mashiach that is different from the Torah law.

### Relationships

- a) Aharon - Elisheva
- b) Aharon - Aminadav
- c) Aminadav - Nadav
- d) Aharon - Pinchas
- e) Moshe - Elazar

## ANSWERS

1. Yes, he is required to do so.

2. Seven.

3. Pesach: the 15th of Nissan.

Shavuot: 7 weeks after the 2nd day of Pesach (6th day of Sivan)

4. Twelve.

5. Death by Stoning

7. By giving him the first Aliya to the Torah and allowing him to lead the Benching.

8. A non-Kohen (a Levi or Yisrael)

9. Yes. The Torah prohibits only the mother and its offspring.

10. The taste of the tree is similar to the taste of the fruit.

11. There was a special room at the Beit HaMikdash, called the Lishkat HaKohen HaGadol, reserved for him.

12. "Awake, you sleepers... remember your Creator."

13. What is necessary is not only these five holidays, but the need to serve Hashem every day.

14. The son of the Egyptian man complained about the stale bread on the Shulchan, and the other Jew defended the Torah.

15. No Kohen may marry a widow (except a widow who was previously married to a Kohen.)

## **Relationships**

- a) Husband & Wife
- b) Son-in-law & Father-in-Law
- c) Grandfather & Grandson
- d) Grandfather & Grandson
- e) Uncle & Nephew