

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT EMOR

Q-1. (a) (1) Why is *Parashat Kedoshim* followed by *Emor's kohanim* laws (2 views)? (2) Why did *Hashem* tell *Moshe*, “say to the *kohanim*”, then repeat, “say to them” (3 views)? **(b)** What does the *Torah* mean by calling a *kohen*, “*ba'al be'amav*” (2 views)? **(c)** (1) Why must *kohanim* stay away from human corpses? (2) Why does this ban not apply to *Aharon's* female offspring (2 views)? **(d)** (1) How does the phrase, “[the *kohen*] shall be holy to you”, teach us that there are times a *kohen* must be given priority over others? (2) What are 6 such instances? (3) What did *beit din* have to do to fulfill this? **(e)** When the *Torah* says, “[the *Kohen Gadol*] shall not leave the *Mikdash*”, does it mean that he could never leave the *Beit haMikdash* (3 views)? **(f)** Why is a *kohen* banned from marrying certain women? **(g)** After 21:13 says that a “[*Kohen Gadol*] shall marry a woman in her virginity”, why does 21:14 add, “only a virgin shall he take as a wife”? **(h)** What did the *Sanhedrin* in the *Lishkat haGazit* (Temple Mount Chamber) spend most of its time doing? (*Vayikra* 21:1,4,7-8,12-15,21)

A-1. (a) (1) In *Kedoshim*, *Bnei Yisrael* were told to (i) strive for *kedusha* – *Emor* describes the higher *kedusha* that *kohanim* had to maintain to do the *avoda*; (ii) separate from the nations by avoiding their practices – *Emor* tells the *kohanim* to separate even further with higher purity; (2) *Moshe* (i) first taught *Kedoshim's* laws and their interpretations to the *kohanim* who would teach *Bnei Yisrael*, then he taught the *kohanim* their special laws (*ibn Ezra*). (ii) doubled the expression to stress the of these laws' importance, which run counter *Bnei Yisrael's* prevalent habits (*Ramban*). (iii) instructed the *kohanim* to repeat these laws to their children to admonish them not to become *tamei mayt* (*Rashi* – *Yevamot* 114a). **(b)** A *kohen*, (1) while allowed to become *tamay* from deceased close relatives, as a *ba'al* (husband), may not become *tamay* from his deceased wife (*Rashi*). (2) as a *ba'al* (esteemed one) due to his exalted status, must guard against becoming *tamay* (*Ramban*). **(c)** (1) Since *kohanim* had to be *tahor* for the *avoda*, they had to separate from a corpse's *tuma* (*Chizkuni*). (2) (i) Women did not do the *avoda* – they did not have to be *tahor* like the males; (ii) since the 1st woman, *Chava*, brought death to mankind, women did not merit the purity of avoiding the dead (*Rokeach*). **(d)** (1) A *kohen's* sanctity is greater than a non-*kohen's*, meriting priority in ritual and non-ritual events (*Gittin* 59b). (2) A *kohen* has priority in (i) getting an *aliyah*; (ii) speaking publicly at events; (iii) reciting *kiddush*, and (iv) *hamotzi*; (v) being served food; (vi) leading *birchat ha-mazon* (*Mishnah Berurah* 201:2). (3) If a *kohen* married a *zona* (immoral woman), *chalala* (daughter of a banned relationship), or *gerusha* (divorcee), *beit din* forced him to divorce her (*Rashi*). **(e)** No – he could not leave (1) to follow his deceased parent's casket and attend the funeral; (2) if he was an *onein* before his parent's burial – he had to remain in the *Beit haMikdash* and continue doing the *avoda* (*Rashi*). (3) and he honors a deceased relative by not leaving the *Beit haMikdash* due to the death (*Ramban*). **(f)** A wife influences a man's thoughts – a *kohen* maintains his *kedusha* by marrying a woman of unblemished background, assuring that his holy work is undisturbed (*Sefer haChinuch* – *Mitzvah* 269). **(g)** 21:13 bans him from marrying a non-virgin – 21:14 is a positive command to him to get married, and it must be to a virgin (*Ramban*). **(h)** Investigating and examining *kohanim's* lineage and blemishes that could disqualify them from doing the *avoda* (*Mitzvah* 276).

Q-2. (a) What is the difference between offering a *korban* as (i) a “*neder*” or (ii) a “*nedava*” in (1) 22:18? and (2) 22:23? **(b)** (1) Why could an animal not be a *korban* until it was 8 days old (3 views)? (2) Since 21:28 bans slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day – and this refers to the female parent, not the male (*Rashi*), why does it say “*shor* (bull – male) and its offspring”, not “*para*” (cow – female)? **(c)** (1) The verse “*ve-lo techalilu et Shem Kadsh*” (do not desecrate My Holy Name) teaches that a person must sacrifice his life rather than commit which 3 sins? (2) In which 2 situations must one sacrifice one's life to not violate any mitzvah? (3) How can we fulfill the *mitzvah* of *kidush Hashem* on a daily basis (2 ways)? (*Vayikra* 22:18,23,27-28,32)

A-2. (a) (1) A (i) *neder* is the offerer's obligation – if the animal was not a valid *korban*, he must bring another; (ii) *nedava* is a donated animal – if that animal could not be offered, he does not bring another (*Megila* 8a). (2) A (i) *neder* is an animal designated as a *korban*; (ii) *nedava* is designated for *bedek haBayit* (“Sanctuary upkeep”) – it could be redeemed and the money used to maintain the *Mikdash* (*Rashi*). **(b)** (1) (i) Until the 8th day, it could be a non-viable birth (*Chizkuni*). (ii) *Shabbat* testifies to *Hashem's* Creation – the animal must be elevated by a *Shabbat* (*Tzror haMor*). (iii) Before 8 days, an animal is unfit for anything – no one wants it for food, trade or a gift (*Mitzvah* 293). (2) Since the previous verse about not offering an animal before the 8th day speaks of a *shor* (male), the *Torah* continues with the same species (*Ramban*). **(c)** (1) (i) Idolatry; (ii) immorality; (iii) murder; (2) (i) if 10 Jews are present, one must not commit any sin to degrade the *Torah*; (ii) during *shemad* (religious persecution), one must sacrifice his life, even for a sin done privately; (3) (i) if one refrains from a sin, not from pressure or for reward, but solely for *Hashem's* sake; (ii) by acting so others are struck by a *Torah*-observant Jew's greatness (*Ramban* – *Hilchot Yesodei haTorah* 5:1-4,10-11).

Q-3. (a) Why does the *mitzvah* of *kidush Hashem* precede the *mo'adim* (holiday) descriptions? **(b)** (1) Why are *Bnei Yisrael* twice told “[the *mo'adim*] *asher tikre'u*” (which you shall declare), in (i) 23:2 and (ii) 23:4? (2) Why are the *Yamim Tovim* that *Bnei Yisrael* are required to declare called “*mikra'ei kodesh*” (2 views)? (3) Why do the *mo'adim* require special food and drink, festive clothing and additional *tefilot*? (4) Why, is the first “*mikra kodesh*” listed *Shabbat*, that *Hashem*, not *Bnei Yisrael*, declared to be every 7th day? **(c)** To what does banned “*melechet avoda*” refer (2 views)? (*Vayikra* 23:2-4,7)

A-3. (a) Since a *Yom Tov* celebration can easily degenerate into a *chilul Hashem*, we are warned that the *mo'adim* must sanctify Him (*Ha'amek Davar*). **(b)** (1) *Beit din* is commanded to (i) designate a 13th month when required, in 23:2; (ii) sanctify each new moon, in 23:4 (*Rashi*). (2) These are days (i) on which *Bnei Yisrael* are summoned and gathered to publicly sanctify these days with *tefila* and praise of *Hashem*, i.e., *Hallel*, wearing clean clothes and feasting and joy (*Ramban*). (ii) which *Bnei Yisrael* are required to change from mundane to holy occurrences (*Onkelos*). (3) These give honor and distinctiveness to the *mo'adim*, to help us focus on achieving spiritual elevation (*haKetav ve-haKabala*). (4) One could think that *Yamim Tovim*, whose dates are set by *beit din*, are less important than *Shabbat*, which *Hashem* set at Creation – the *Torah* teaches that violating *Yom Tov* is as serious as violating *Shabbat*, and celebrating *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* properly are equally rewarded (*Rashi*). **(c)** Work activities that (1) would result in a great financial loss are banned on *Yom Tov* but not on *Chol haMo'ed* (*Rashi*). (2) are not for making food are banned, but not those for human consumption (*Ramban*).

Q-4. (a) (1) Why does the *Torah* say, “*ve-heiveitem et omer*” (you shall bring an *omer*) immediately after saying, “*u-ketzartem et kezira*” (you shall reap your harvest)? (2) Why was the *korban omer* offered on *Pesach*? **(b)** (1) What is *sefirat ha’omer*’s goal? (2) Why do we begin counting on *Pesach*’s 2nd, not 1st, day? (3) When the *Torah* says to begin counting “*mi-macharat haShabbat*” (from the day after the *Shabbat*), why do we begin on *Pesach*’s 2nd day, not on Sunday, the day after *Pesach*’s 1st *Shabbat* (4 views)? (4) Since the 23:16 says, “count 50 days”, why do we count 49 days? **(c)** Why do we celebrate *Lag baOmer* (4 reasons)? (*Vayikra* 23:10,15-16)

A-4. (a) (1) One may not begin the barley harvest until the *omer* is harvested and brought to the *kohen* (*Ramban*). (2) A farmer’s grain’s success is judged on *Pesach* – *Bnei Yisrael*, via the *korban omer*, thank *Hashem* for the crops’ growth (*Vayikra Raba*). **(b)** (1) *Yetziat Mitzrayim*’s goal was to free *Bnei Yisrael* from slavery to accept the *Torah* – we count 49 days between *yetziat Mitzrayim* (*Pesach*’s 1st day), and *matan Torah* (*Shavuot*), to show gratitude for the *Torah*; (2) since “*ein me’arvin simcha be-simcha*” (do not mingle 2 joys), we do not blend *yetziat Mitzrayim*’s joy with *matan Torah*’s joy (*Mitzvah* 306). (3) (i) The *Torah* says count 50 days and 7 full weeks, teaching that, sometimes, count 7 full weeks – when *Pesach* begins on Sunday – other times, count 50 days that are not 7 full weeks – when *Pesach* starts on another day; (ii) the *Torah* commands counting from *Pesach* to *Shavuot* – starting to count on the Sunday after *Pesach* begins results in more than 50 days; (iii) with 52 *Shabbatot* a year, we would not know which *Shabbat* to start counting – since there is only one day on which *Pesach* begins, it must be the day after *Pesach* begins to start counting; (iv) the *Torah* says, “for 7 days, eat *matzo*” (*Devarim* 16:3), then, “for 6 days, eat *matzo*” (*Devarim* 16:8), teaching that while we eat *matza* for 7 days, there is some *matza* we may eat only for 6 days, i.e., *chadash* (*matza* from new grain) after the *korban omer* is brought – thus, the *omer* must be brought and the counting must begin on *Pesach*’s 2nd day (*Menachot* 65b-66a). (4) Just as for the *yoveil* (jubilee), 25:8 says, “count 7 cycles of 7 years, 7 times 7”, and 25:10 adds, “sanctify the 50th year”, the *Torah* here wants us to count 7 times 7 (49) days and sanctify the 50th day (*Shavuot*) (*Ramban*). **(c)** On *Lag baOmer*, (1) 12,000 pairs of *Rebi Akiva*’s students, who began dying on *Pesach*, stopped dying (*Orach Chaim* 493:1-2). (2) *Rebi Akiva* gave *semicha* to 5 surviving *talmidim* – *Rebi’s Meir, Yehuda, Elazar, Nechemia* and *Shimon bar Yochai* – through them, the Oral *Torah* was disseminated; (3) it is *Rebi Shimon bar Yochai*’s *yahrtzeit* – on this day, he revealed the *Zohar* (*Sedei Chemed*). (4) We celebrate the *mun*’s starting to fall in the *midbar* – *Bnei Yisrael* reached *Midbar Sin* on 15 *Iyar* (*Shemot* 16:1); they complained about lacking food on 16 *Iyar*; on 17 *Iyar*, *Moshe* told them that *Hashem* would give food “tomorrow” – the *mun* began falling on 18 *Iyar*, the *omer*’s 33rd day (*Chatam Sofer*).

Q-5. (a) (1) Which 3 of the 613 *mitzvot* are done only on *Shavuot*? (2) Why is the *sh’tei halechem* (2 breads) *mincha* (i) brought on *Shavuot*? (ii) *chametz*? (3) Why is *Shavuot* one day, unlike 7 days for *Pesach* and *Sukkot* (3 views)? **(b)** Why are the *mitzvot* to leave some of the farmer’s crops for the poor stated among the *mo’adim*’s *halachot* (2 views)? (*Vayikra* 23:15-22,36)

A-5. (a) (1) To (i) offer the *sh’tei halechem* (2 breads) *mincha* (*Mitzvah* 307); (ii) rest on *Shavuot* (*Mitzvah* 308); (iii) do no work on *Shavuot* (*Mitzvah* 309). (2) (i) One may not offer *korbanot* from the new wheat harvest until the *sh’tei halechem mincha* is offered; (ii) The *sh’tei halechem* is a *todah* (thanksgiving) offering to *Hashem* for protecting the harvest, and a *korban toda* must include *chametz* (*Ramban*). (3) (i) Since *Shavuot* falls during the crops’ growing season, *Hashem* did not bother farmers with a long holiday (*Sifri*). (ii) Just as *Shemini Atzeret* is *Sukkot*’s 1-day finale, *Shavuot* is *Pesach*’s 1-day finale (*Medrash Tanchuma*). (iii) Sharing one’s harvest with the poor on the days after *Shavuot* equals the *mo’adim*’s holiness (*Chatam Sofer*). **(b)** (1) So a farmer realizes that his crops are really *Hashem*’s, and he must give them to those He designates (*Meshech Chachma*). (2) Doing these *mitzvot* equals building the *Beit haMikdash* and bringing *Yom Tov korbanot* (*Rashi*).

Q-6. (a) Why do the laws of the (1) *menorah* and (2) *lechem ha-panim* (showbread) follow the *mo’adim* laws? **(b)** (1) Why is the “blasphemer” incident told after the *menorah* and *lechem ha-panim* laws? (2) What was *Moshe*’s relationship to the blasphemer’s family? **(c)** Why does the *Torah* say, “an eye for an eye”, but mean monetary payment? (*Vayikra* 24:2-11,19-20)

A-6. (a) Just as *Bnei Yisrael* raise their spirituality during the *mo’adim*, they must, on a daily basis, grow (1) spiritually, signified by the *menorah*’s flames, and (2) materially, signified by the showbread; **(b)** (1) just as the *menorah* and showbread were pure, we may not taint our link with *Hashem*, like the blasphemer did (*Hirsch*). (2) In *Mitzrayim*, the blasphemer’s mother, *Shelomit bat Divri*, had relations with her husband’s *Mitzri* taskmaster, giving birth to the blasphemer – when the *Mitzri* tried to kill her husband, *Moshe* killed the *Mitzri* (*Shemot* 2:12) with the *Shem haMeforash* (*Hashem*’s Name). In the *midbar*, the blasphemer, learning what *Moshe* had done, said the *Shem haMeforash* profanely (*Vayikra Raba*). **(c)** It teaches that while *beit din* was not allowed to carry out the physical punishment – to remove an eye – the perpetrator deserved this penalty (*ibn Ezra*).

Q-7. According to the *haftara*, **(a)** to what length should *kohanim* grow their hair? **(b)** how often must a *kohen* take a haircut? (*Yechezkel* 44:20)

A-7. (a) Medium length – *kohanim* may neither shave their heads nor let their locks grow long; **(b)** at least once every 30 days (*Sanhedrin* 22b).