

Q.1. (a) Why does the parasha begin with "re'eh" (see — singular), followed by verses in the plural (2 views)? (b) (1) To which blessing and curse did Moshe refer (3 views)? (2) Why does "et ha-beracha" (the blessing), add "et", but for "ve-hakela'at" (the curse), no "et"? (c) Why did Moshe again tell Bnei Yisrael, "For you are crossing the Yarden" (12:31) (2 views)? (d) Concerning destroying all idols, why did Moshe add, "Do not do this to Hashem" — Bnei Yisrael surely would not destroy the Beit haMikdash (4 views)? (Devarim 11:26-31, 12:4)

A.1. (a) (1) (i) The world's good and evil are balanced — a person can tip the world's scale for blessing or curse with one mitzvah or sin (Chatham Sofer). (ii) Bnei Yisrael is the singular force to see the mitzvot done (Tzoror haim). (b) (1) (i) Those they will get on Har Gerizim and Eival — Devarim 11:29 (Rashi). (ii) The blessing is the good fortune from doing mitzvot — the curse is the poor life for not doing them (Sorno). (iii) Those described in Parashat Bechotai's tochacha (Ba'al haTurim). (2) The tochacha's 11 blessing verses begin with an alef ("im") and end with a tuf ("komeniyut") — "et" (alef-tuf) indicates that Bnei Yisrael will be blessed from alef to tuf — the curses begin with a vav ("ve-im") and end with a hei ("Moshe") — hei and vav are alphabetically next to each other — the curses will be narrow, if Bnei Yisrael do teshuva (Medrash Tanchuma). (c) (1) They were about to enter Cana'an — by keeping the mitzvot, they will keep the land (Abarbanel). (2) Crossing the Yarden will be miraculous (Mizrachi). (d) This bans Bnei Yisrael from (1) offering korbanot anywhere they want, as idolaters do (Devarim 12:22) — in the Beit haMikdash only; (2) erasing Hashem's name, while expunging idols' names (Devarim 12:3); (3) removing even one stone from the mizbe'ach or the azara, while demolishing idols' temples (Devarim 12:3); (4) acting like idolaters with sins that would cause the Beit haMikdash's destruction (Rashi).

Q.2. (a) Which of the 4 ma'aserot (tithes) — (i) rishon, (ii) sheini, (iii) ani, (iv) beheima — were brought to Yershulayim (2 views)? (b) (1) 12:17 — "In your cities, do not eat: ma'asei your grain, wine, oil — your cattle and flocks' firstborn — all your vow and free-will offerings — and what your hand raises" — includes which of the 613 mitzvot? (c) In banning eating blood, why did Moshe add (1) "chazak" (be strong) (5 views)? (2) "do not eat the soul with the meat" (2 views)? (d) How do we "shamor" (safeguard) the mitzvot? (Devarim 12:6, 17, 23, 28)

A.2. (a) (1) (i) Sheini (2 views) and (iv) beheima (livestock) had to be eaten in Yershulayim (Rashi). (2) All 4 — (i) rishon (1 view) and (iii) ani (poor man's) also should be brought, so the kohanim and levim should rejoice (Ramban). (b) The ban on eating outside Yershulayim — ma'asei sheini (1) grain (Sefer haChinuch — Mitzvah 442), (2) wine (443), (3) oil (444); (4) an unblemished bechor (445); a korban's meat outside the Beit haMikdash for a (5) chatat, asham (446), (6) olah (447), or (7) before the blood is sprinkled (448); (8) eating bikurim before they are placed in the azara (449). (c) (1) (i) Eating blood was common — Bnei Yisrael must strongly resist this; (ii) if we must be strong to not eat blood, which is not craved, we certainly must strongly curb other strong desires (Rashi). (iii) We must not be overly involved in physical desires like eating meat — desires consume our souls, signified by blood (Vilna Gaon). (iv) People thought eating blood attached them to sheidim (demons) who can reveal the future — we must strongly resist this (Sorno). (v) We must strongly fight libels of Jews of killing gentiles and consuming their blood (Ozayvim laTorah). (2) It bans eating (i) eiver and (ii) basar min ha-chai (a live animal's limb or meat) (Chulin 102b). (d) By studying Torah (Rashi).

Q.3. (a) Why did Moshe repeat, "you shall not add [to the mitzvot or subtract], after saying this in Devarim 4:2 (2 views)? (b) (1) Which 6 of the 613 mitzvot concern the meisit (one enticing others to serve other gods)? (2) Why is a meisit treated harshly (4 reasons)? (Devarim 13:1,7,12)

A.3. (a) (1) 4:2 refers to adding to or deleting one of the 613 mitzvot — here, the Torah bans modifying a mitzvah, e.g., 3 or 5 parshiot in tefillin, not 4 (Vilna Gaon). (2) The verse here tells us that adding anything to a mitzvah really detracts from it (Sanhedrin 29a). (b) (1) To (i) show a meisit no affection (Mitzvah 457). (ii) hate him (Mitzvah 458). (iii) do not rescue him from death (Mitzvah 459). (iv) not argue in his favor (Mitzvah 460). (v) present him negatively (Mitzvah 461). (vi) do not entice Bnei Yisrael to idolatry (Mitzvah 462). (2) (i) Inciting sin is worse than murder, since the meisit harms one's immortal soul; (ii) not helping a rasha brings Bnei Yisrael peace (Ramban). (iii) The meisit's death prevents his sinning more — his death, with teshuva, atones for his sins; (iv) the harm he causes society is limitless (R. Yona).

Q.4. (a) How do the kashrut laws prove the Torah's divinity? (b) Why did Moshe say (1) "you are Hashem's children" before banning cutting one's skin to mourn the dead (3 views)? (2) not to make a bald spot for mourning "between your eyes"? (3) the ma'aser laws after banning basar be-chalav (milk and meat together)? (c) Why did ma'asei sheini have to be eaten in Yershulayim (2 reasons)? (Devarim 14:1,7,8,21,23)

A.4. (a) The Torah here lists 3 animals with split hooves but do not chew their cud and one that chews its cud with no split hooves — no other animal in the world with one kosher sign has been found — only Hashem could know this (Chulin 59a). (b) (1) Do not overly mourn (i) for anyone since you are "Hashem's child" (Sorno). (ii) one who dies, since we are like a child whose father sends him to a better place (Ohr haChaim). (iii) since Hashem loves you even more than your father does — what He does is for your own good (ibn Ezra). (2) Just as a bald spot is banned where hair normally grows, tefillin is placed where hairs grow, not between one's eyes (6:5) (Rilva — Makot 20a). (3) Basar be-chalav is banned like kilayim (mixing species) — if you do these laws, Hashem will "cook" (i.e., rpen) your produce, enriching you — ‘te-aseir’ (take tithes) sounds like ‘tit-asheir’ (you will prosper) (Ba'al haTurim). (c) (1) By eating it surrounded by kohanim, levim and the Sanhedrin, a person and his family will learn to fear Hashem, increase Torah study and do mitzvot carefully (Ramban). (2) Ma'asei sheini introduced rich people, with abundant ma'asei in Yershulayim, to send their sons to learn Torah there for a long period while dining on the ma'asei sheini (R. Yona).
Q-5. (a) Is it a mitzvah to require a gentile to pay back money that you lent him (2 views)? (b) (1) At what time during the shemita year are fellow Jews’ debts cancelled? (2) If the borrower chooses to return the cancelled loan as a gift, (i) what must the lender say? (ii) may the lender accept the gift? (c) Why does Moshe use double verbs for giving tzedaka – (1) pato’ach tiftach (open, you shall open)? (2) ve-haveit ta’avteinu (grant, you shall grant)? (3) natone titein (give, you shall give)? (4) ha’aneik ta’anik (endow, you shall endow)? (d) Why are the laws of freed slaves in Parashat Mishpatim repeated here? (2 reasons) (Devarim 15:3,8-18)

A-5. (a) (1) Yes – it restrains us from becoming too friendly with them (Rambam, per Sefer haChinuch – Mitzvah 476). (2) No – it reinforces the mitzvah to act kindly to Jew (Ramban). (b) (1) At the shemita year’s last moment – sunset on Erev Rosh Hashana of the next year; (2) (i) “meshameiti ani” (I have let [the loan] go); (ii) – the borrower is encouraged to give the lender the loan principle as a gift (Mitzvah 477). (c) (1) You must open your hand even many times; (2) if the pauper will not accept a gift, give him a loan; (3) you should, if he needs it, give him even 100 times; (4) give the freed slave gifts that everyone can see (Rashi). (d) The Torah teach 2 additional laws – (1) If a father sells his daughter, she must be freed after 6 years, even if she has not reached puberty; (2) the owner must grant the slave gifts when he or she leaves (Rashi).

Q-6. (a) Why does Moshe mention the 3 reglaim, not Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Shemini Atzeret? (b) (1) Why is matza called “lechem oni” (6 views)? (2) Why does the Torah say, “for 7 days, eat matzof” (16:3), then, “For 6 days, eat matzof” (16:8)? (c) In commanding joy on Sukkot, why does the Torah add “ach”, saying, “ve-hayita ach same’i’ach” (you will be “ach” happy) (4 reasons)? (d) Why did Hashem, through the halacha of seteika de’yoma (calendar doubt), cause Bnei Yisrael to observe 2 yom tov days chutz la’aretz (2 reasons)? (Devarim 16:1-17)

A-6. (a) Bnei Yisrael were about to enter Eretz Yisrael – he mentioned the Yomim Tovim related to the agricultural cycle (S.R. Hirsch). (b) (1) Matza (i) recalls the Mitzrim’s “oni” (afflictions) (Rashi). (ii) must be eaten in “animus” (mourning) – not made from ma’aser sheini or bikurim grain that must be eaten in joy; (iii) must be “oni” (poor) – not kneaded with wine, oil or honey; (iv) is bread on which “oni” (we declare [Hallel and the hagada]); (v) should be “oni” (unrefined) flour (Peshachim 36a). (vi) for the mitzvah is poor man’s food – “oni” (broken) (Peshachim 116a). (2) While eating matza for 7 days, one may eat “chadash” (new grain) matza only for 6 days, starting Pesach’s 2nd day – the korban omer; (c) Ach – (1) “only” by properly celebrating Sukkot will we be happy; (2) adds that we rejoice not only on Sukkot, but on Shemini Atzeret, too (Rashi). (3) “but”, limiting rejoicing in this world – full joy only in olam haba; (4) instructs us to not overly feast, so that our joy does not turn into frivolity (R. Bechaya). (d) (1) Having to observe 2 yom tov days will arouse Bnei Yisrael to ask Him to return them to Eretz Yisrael (Tiferet Tzion). (2) Since they did not fulfill the 1-day yom tov Torah law properly in Eretz Yisrael, He caused them to atone by observing more days in galut (S.R. Hirsch).

Q-7. In the haftara, when the navi says “all who thirst should go to the water” and “go buy wine and milk with no money and no barter,” what is symbolized by (a) water (2 explanations)? (b) wine? and (c) milk? (Yeshayahu 55:1)

A-7. Water, wine and milk symbolize Torah – (a) (1) like water, the world needs Torah to exist; (2) water flows from a high to a low place – humble people preserve Torah; (b) wine, like Torah, causes one to rejoice; (c) like milk nurtures a baby, Torah sustains one’s soul (Ta’anit 7a).