

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Emor

For the week ending 15 Iyar 5759
30 April & 1 May 1999

Parsha Questions

1. Which male descendants of Aharon are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body?
2. Does a *kohen* have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away?
3. How does one honor a *kohen*?
4. How does the Torah restrict the *kohen gadol* with regard to mourning?
5. The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who "approaches holy objects" while in a state of *tumah* (impurity) is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by "approaches"?
6. What is the smallest piece of a corpse that is able to transmit *tumah*?
7. Who in the household of a *kohen* may eat *terumah*?
8. If the daughter of a *kohen* marries a "*zar*" she may no longer eat *terumah*. What is a *zar*?
9. What is the difference between a *neder* and a *nedavah*?
10. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day?
11. How does the Torah define "profaning" the Name of Hashem?
12. Apart from Shabbos, how many days are there during the year about which the Torah says that work is forbidden?
13. How big is an *omer*?
14. On what day do we begin to "count the *omer*"?
15. Why do we begin counting the *omer* at night?
16. How does the *omer* differ from other *minchah* offerings?
17. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is called a "*zichron teruah*" (sound of remembrance). For what is it a reminder?
18. What is unusual about the wood of the *esrog* tree?
19. Who was the father of the blasphemer?
20. What is the penalty for intentionally wounding one's parent?

Bonus Question

"And you shall count from the day after Pesach, from the day you bring the omer offering, seven complete weeks...." (23:15)

Starting the day after Pesach, Jews worldwide begin the mitzvah of "counting the omer," counting the 49 days until the Festival of Shavuos. Why don't we say a *shehechyanu* blessing when we begin this mitzvah, as we do when fulfilling other mitzvahs that come around once a year? For example, we say *shehechyanu* when we shake the lulav and read the Megillah.

Bonus Answer

The *omer* was an offering brought on the day after Pesach in Temple times. We only say *shehechyanu* on a mitzvah which brings us joy. Counting the omer, on the other hand, reminds us of the pain that we are presently unable to bring the Temple offerings.

Rashba, cited in Aruch Hashulchan 489:5

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I Did Not Know That!

“The son of the Israelite woman cursed Hashem...his mother’s name was Shlomis bas Divri...”(24:11) The Midrash says: “Why was she called ‘bas Divri?’ Because she brought dever (disease) upon her son.” (Vayikrah Rabba 32)

The blasphemer was executed by stoning. Why, then, does the above Midrash say that his mother brought “dever” — disease — upon him?

One of the ten plagues was the plague of “dever” — cattle disease. The commentaries explain that although no cattle belonging to the Children of Israel died, there was one apparently Jewish person whose cattle did die. Who was this person? The son of Shlomis bas Divri. His cattle died because his father was an Egyptian taskmaster; he was therefore not one of the “Children of Israel,” such that his cattle would enjoy miraculous protection. Hence, by bearing a son from an Egyptian man, his mother caused her son to suffer from the plague of “dever.”

Heard from Rabbi Sholem Fishbane

Answers to this Week’s Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 21:1 - Challalim — those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from a relationship forbidden to a kohen.
2. 21:3 - No, he is required to do so.
3. 21:8 - He is first in all matters of holiness. For example, a kohen reads from the Torah first, and is usually the one to lead the blessings before and after meals.
4. 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long, nor attend to his close relatives if they die, nor accompany a funeral procession.
5. 22:3 - Eats.
6. 22:5 - A piece the size of an olive.
7. 22:11 - He, his wife, his sons, his unmarried daughters and his non-Jewish slaves.
8. 22:12 - A non-kohen.
9. 22:18 - A neder is an obligation upon a person; a nedavah is an obligation placed upon an object.
10. 22:28 - Yes. The Torah only prohibits slaughtering an animal and its mother on the same day.
11. 22:32 - Willfully transgressing the commandments.
12. 23:7-36 - Seven.
13. 23:10 - One tenth of an eipha.
14. 23:15 - On the 16th of Nissan.
15. 23:15 - The Torah requires counting seven complete weeks. If we begin counting in the daytime, the seven weeks would not be complete, because according to the Torah a day starts at nightfall.
16. 23:16 - It was made from barley.
17. 23:24 - The akeidas (binding of) Yitzchak.
18. 23:40 - It has the same taste as the fruit.
19. 24:10 - The Egyptian killed by Moshe (Shemos 2:12).
20. 24:21 - Death.

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

21:6	Holiness
22:32	Sanctifying G-d
23:17	Leavened Bread
23:27	Judgment and Repentance
23:40	The <i>Esrog</i>

Sefer Hachinuch

291	Perfection of Creation
294	Divine Providence
296	Purpose of Creation
306	Counting the <i>Omer</i>
313	Yom Kippur
324	The <i>Lulav</i>
325	The <i>Succah</i>