

EMOR



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



Rabbi Reuven Tradburks Director of RCA Israel Region



1st aliya (Vayikra 21:1-15)

Kohanim are not permitted to come in contact with the dead except for their nuclear family. Nor are they to adopt non Jewish mourning practices such as balding their head and beard or cutting their flesh. Kohanim need be holy to G-d, for they are His front line servers. They may not marry a divorcee. You are to sanctify them. The Kohen Gadol should not become tamei at all, for he is anointed. He may not marry a divorcee or widow.

Holiness dominates the book of Vayikra. Holiness in the Torah means rarefied. The closer to G-d, the more rarefied, the holier. But it comes with a price; holiness, that proximity to G-d comes with greater restrictions. It is no surprise that the Kohanim, those who are entrusted with facilitating offerings, man's approach to

the Divine, should have unique rules for their personal conduct. But why does holiness, that proximity to G-d require more restrictions?

In the rendezvous of G-d and man, man need be reticent. Careful. Finite man approaching infinite G-d invites arrogance, pride, self-importance. We don't want that. We want to approach gingerly, humbly. Carefully. The message of holiness is that we approach with care. The many rules of the Mikdash reflect this tentative approach.

The Kohanim who offer the offerings have their rules too. There are restrictions on who they may marry. This fits seamlessly with the rules outlined last week regarding who is permitted to marry and who not. The first 2 things man is told on the 6th day of Creation are: be fruitful and multiply. And eat vegetation and fruit. Relationships. And food. The first 2 things outlined in this book that shape us to be holy are: kashrut and forbidden relationships. Holiness inheres in the borders of food and relationships. The kohanim who need to be more scrupulously holy have their own rules here concerning their relationships.



2nd aliya (21:16-22:16)

A kohen who has a blemish may not serve in the Mikdash. This includes blind, lame, broken limbs, eye conditions and others. He may consume holy items but not perform the service. A kohen may not serve while Tamei, as this desecrates the holy. While a non-kohen may not consume the holy (Teruma), those who are a part of the kohen's home may. His daughter, before marriage or after if childless, is part of his home and may consume the holy. The holy is profaned when

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**Rebbetzin Josephine
Reichel ע"ה**

on her 22nd yahrzeit

ז אייר

from the Bronner and Reichel families

consumed by others.

A blemished kohen may not serve in the Mikdash. And a kohen who is tamei may not consume holy things; neither offerings nor Teruma. Teruma may also be consumed by any member of his family. But only when they are in a state of purity.

Today, we assume all kohanim are in a state of impurity and hence are not able to consume Teruma. However, they may burn it. If a person has an olive tree and wants to give teruma to a real live Mr. Kohen, then Mrs. Kohen may use that olive oil that was given to them as Teruma by their neighbors to light Shabbat candles. With our return to Eretz Yisrael, many Shabbat candles of kohanim across the land are lit with Teruma olive oil.



3rd aliya (22:17-33) An animal offering may not have a blemish. This includes blind, broken limbs, eye conditions and others. This applies to a non-Jew's offering as well. An animal with a blemish is not pleasing. An offering must be at least 8 days old. A mother and offspring may not be slaughtered on the same day. An offering may not be eaten after the 2nd day. Do not profane My Name, rather sanctify Me in your midst.

The kohen need be unblemished; the offering too. A non-Jew may bring an offering in

May the Torah learned in this
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our Mikdash; but on our terms, not theirs. It must meet the rigor of our standards for offerings.

The conclusion of this section states that following these rules sanctifies Me, while offerings that are improper profanes Me. In this rather innocuous comment lies the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem and Hillul Hashem. Actions done by little ole me can cause G-d's Name to be desecrated, Hillul Hashem. Or sanctified, Kiddush Hashem. While there are a lot of details of Holiness in offerings, our every day actions give us an even greater opportunity for Holiness. The Holiness of G-d's Name hovers over our every action. What a weighty responsibility. And wonderful opportunity.



4th aliya (23:1-22) These are the holy days: 6 days work, 7th day is Shabbat. Pesach is on the 14th

of the 1st month; for 7 days eat matza. The first day is holy, no melacha should be done, as is the 7th day. The Omer offering of freshly harvested barley is brought the day after the first holiday day of Pesach. It permits consumption of the new grain. Count 7 full weeks and on the 50th day bring an offering of new wheat as baked chametz. That day (Shavuot) shall be a holy day on which no melacha shall be done. When harvesting, leave the corners and the dropped items to the poor and stranger.

We are introduced to holiness in time. The holiness of proximity to G-d has been expressed in holiness in space, the Mishkan. And through food and relationships, we are holy. And kohanim have holiness. Now, time too. Shabbat and holidays are a rendezvous with G-d, not only in a particular place but in a particular time as

well. Rav Soloveitchik pointed out that we have Kabbalat Shabbat but we do not have Kabbalat Yom Tov. Because the rendezvous changes hosts. On Yom Tov there is a mitzvah of aliya l'regel, pilgrimage. We visit Him in *His* home. On Shabbat, He visits us in *our* home. On Shabbat we welcome Him to our home, hence Kabbalat Shabbat – more accurately we welcome the Shechina, her. When it is our turn to host, Shabbat, we welcome our guest, the Shechina to our home through Kabbalat Shabbat. Shabbat is more than a wonderfully enjoyable day off, with meaningful time with family and friends. It is a holy day, a rendezvous with the Shechina; a day when we invite the Shechina to join us in our homes.



5th aliya (23:23-32) The first day of the 7th month (Rosh Hashana) is a truah remembrance. No

work shall be done. The 10th day (Yom Kippur) is a holy day on which to afflict your soul, for it is a day of atonement. No work shall be done. From evening til evening.

Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are not pilgrimage holidays. We will see in Parshat Pinchas that their offerings are not the same as the 3 regalim. But they share the work restriction with all the other holidays. Whether the rendezvous is joyful or reflective, holy time is marked by work restriction. Work and its accomplishment, while valuable, is tempered by its cessation. Our lives are not to be consumed by our work; we reclaim the meaning of life

**Condolences to Paul Jacobs
and family on the passing of his wife
Leah a"h**

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itself, independent of work, on Shabbat and holidays. It is the rendezvous with G-d of those days that gives life meaning.



6th aliya (23:33-44) The 15th of the 7th month begins a 7-day holiday of Sukkot. The first day is holy, no work shall be done. The 8th day is holy, no work shall be done. These are the holy days each with its offerings, besides the offerings of Shabbat and voluntary ones. And also on the 15th of the 7th month take a Lulav and Etrog and rejoice before G-d for 7 days. Dwell in Sukkot so you shall know that I had the Jews dwell in Sukkot upon the Exodus.

After all the holidays have been outlined and summarized, the Torah goes back and says to take the Lulav for 7 days and rejoice. It would seem that the Lulav is the expression of appreciation at the end of

the holiday cycle that began with Pesach. How fortunate are we to enjoy our special days. Sukkot is the last holiday of the holiday cycle of the Torah. Hence we shake the Lulav in Hallel, the prayer of appreciation for our holiday cycle during Sukkot, the last of the holidays in the holiday cycle.



7th aliya (24:1-23) Bring oil for a permanent light in the Menorah, set outside the Holy of Holies. Bake 12 loaves to be placed in 2 groups of 6 on the Shulchan every Shabbat. The kohanim shall eat this holy bread in the Mikdash. 2 men fought. The Jewish man cursed G-d. He was held until his sentence would be determined by G-d. He shall be stoned. These crimes are punishable by death: cursing G-d, murder. Others have financial penalties: property damage and bodily assault.

Oil, flour and wine figure prominently in the Mikdash. Oil in the Menorah. Bread on the Shulchan. The holiday offerings are accompanied by oil, flour and wine. It is curious that each of these is processed by people. None of them occur naturally.

*The OU Israel Family
wishes a heartfelt
MAZAL TOV
to Rabbi Avi & Prina Berman
and family
on the engagement of their son
Shlomo to Tamar
daughter of
Ravi Yedidya & Racheli Melamed
of Beit Chaggai*

.....

*Mazal Tov to the Grandparents:
Fyvie & Rachel Leah Berman
and Alex & Daniella Kuflik*

STATS

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
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 prohibitions
Emor has more than one mitzvah per two p'sukim, five times the Torah's average. Only Ki Teitzei (with 74) has more mitzvot than Emor.

Olives, wheat and grapes are the natural products. When processed they become oil, flour and wine. We serve the Creator with human creativity, specifically with things processed by human hands.

The subject of the death penalty in the Torah is a weighty one. But certainly, the punishment by death of the blasphemer is to tell us that our life's meaning, its purpose is to sanctify G-d by our behavior. Cursing Him drains our life of its purpose.

HAFTORAH EMOR

YEchezkel 44:15-31

This week's haftorah echoes the parsha in that it discusses various laws pertaining to the *kohanim*.

We are privy in this memorable section to learn about the service of the *kohanim* in the third Holy Temple through the elevated prophecy of Yechezkel. The realities he describes will come to fruition at the time of the Final Redemption.

As part of his vision we learn about the unique vestments worn by the priests, laws of who they can marry, and the laws regarding coming in contact with a dead body.

There is also a call to the *kohanim* to serve as teachers and leaders of the nation of Israel.

Being that the *kohanim* are to serve solely as the emissaries of the Almighty, they do not receive a portion of the Land of Israel but are given the meat of the sacrifices and tithes which support their holy work. ■

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