

PARSHAT EMOR

PART I - QUESTIONS FOR THE 'SHABBOS TABLE'

"CHILLUL" & "KEDUSHA" [chapters 21 & 22]

1. As you review the laws in chapters 21 & 22, note how often we find the word (and/or concepts of) "chillul" and "kedusha". [Note as well how we find these words in just about each 'parshia' division within these two chapters.]

What is the meaning of each of these two words, and how are these concepts related?

Use this to explain the thematic connection between the topics found in these two chapters.

2. How do these two words - "chillul" and "kedusha" - relate to the overall theme of Sefer Vayikra (as discussed in our shiur on Acharei Mot). Relate especially to 18:1-5, i.e. the 'introductory psukim' of the second half of Sefer Vayikra.

Relate your answer as well to 22:31-33, noting how they summarize of this unit (and these concepts), and form a beautiful conclusion.

[Relate also to Tehillim 34:13-15!]

3. In chapter 21, we find how the "kohanim" are bound by a special set of an additional laws [and restrictions] - because their responsibility is to serve God. Can you find a similar concept in relation to the special laws in Parshat Kedoshim (Vayikra chapters 19 & 20) that Bnei Yisrael are obligated to keep?

In your opinion, are the laws in Parshat Kedoshim special for the people of Israel, or would God expect all mankind to keep those laws. Explain your answer.

In your answer, relate to 20:26, noting how we find yet another beautiful summary pasuk!

4. As you study the laws in chapters 21 & 22, attempt to explain the logic of the progression from one topic to the next. While doing so, relate to the following questions:

How is the law of a KOHEN "tamey" similar to the law of KOHEN "ba'al mum" [someone with a physical blemish or defect]? How is it different?

Attempt to explain why a kohen "ba'al mum" is permitted to eat "kodshim", while a "kohen tamey" cannot.

Why can't either of them offer korbanot?

In what manner are the laws relating to a kohen "ba'al mum" similar to the laws of an animal that is a "ba'al mum"?

How is the prohibition against offering an animal less than eight days old similar to the prohibition of a "ba'al mum"?

5. Even though a KOHEN "ba'al mum" cannot offer korbanot (see 21:16-21), he is permitted to eat them (see 21:22-23). Attempt to explain the underlying logic of these two laws.

Would you consider either (or both) of them 'fair'? In other words, is it 'fair' that a kohen cannot offer a sacrifice just because he has some type of deformity?

6. Recall how chapters 6 & 7 in Parshat Tzav constituted a special set of laws for the "kohanim" concerning HOW they are supposed to offer the various korbanot.

In what manner are the laws in Parshat Tzav different from the laws relating to "kohanim" in Parshat Emor (in chapters 21-22)? [Note the header in 6:1-2, compare with 21:1.]

Relate your answer to our shiur on Parshat Acharei Mot in regard to the two 'halves' of Sefer Vayikra. [In other words, how does Parshat Tzav relate to "kedushat Mishkan", while Parshat Emor relates to "kedushat ha'am".]

PARALLEL PSUKIM

1. What is difficult about the last pasuk in chapter 21? In other words, what specifically did Moshe tell Aharon, the Kohanim and Bnei Yisrael? [Or what does it 'summarize'?]

In your answer, relate 21:16-17, 21:1, & 20:1-2! What is special about these three 'headers', and how do they explain the last pasuk in chapter 21?

Do you think that this summary pasuk could also be considered a conclusion to chapters 18->19 as well?

Support your answer!

2. Carefully study the 'style' of the opening psukim to chapter 23 (i.e. 23:1-4), noting how they contain a 'double introduction'. Then, compare this 'style' to the opening psukim to Parshat Va'yakhel (i.e. Shmot 35:1-4).

Note how each contains a similar commandment in regard to Shabbat, which doesn't appear to be directly related to the header!

In your opinion, how can this parallel 'style' help understand the connection between the laws of shabbat in relation to both the building the Mishkan and the "moadim"?

See Ramban on 23:2 for a detailed discussion of this topic and this parallel.

3. As your review chapter 23 (i.e. the "moadim"), note how the phrase "chukat olam l'doroteichem..." can be found in the laws of almost every holiday. First, verify this statement by locating the precise phrase that is used for each holiday.

Attempt to explain what this phrase means, and how it relates to each holiday. Relate as well to Shmot 12:14.

Is this phrase for each holiday identical? If not, which holiday(s) is different? [Relate to the word "moshvoteichem" in each!]

Can you explain why this word is missing in specifically in regard to "succot"? Relate your answer to the pasuk that follows: "ba'sukkot tayshvu shivat yamim..." (see 23:41-42), and why Succot **should** be different in this regard.

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PART II - QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATION (for weekly shiur)

1. In Parshat Emor (chapter 23) we find a complete list of the Jewish holidays. Where else in Chumash do we find a set of laws that discusses either all (or at least most) of the Holidays? [If [or when] you give up, see Shmot 23:24-20, 34:18-26, & Bamidbar chapters 28-29 and Devarim chapter 16.]

As you study those units, see if you can identify different 'categories' of Holidays. Explain how your division is based on how they are presented in Chumash.

2. In what manner is the presentation of the CHAGIM in Parshat Emor different than the others? In what manner is it similar?

Can you identify a unifying theme for the details about the holidays that are mentioned in this chapter?

3. Note the dates that the Torah uses for each holiday. Are they based on the solar calendar (i.e. the agricultural seasons) or lunar calendar (month/day)? [or both?]. Can you explain why?

What type of date does the Torah use for those same holidays in the other parshiot of "chagim" (as mentioned above in question #1)?

4. As you study chapter 23, make a table listing each of the chagim. For each chag, note the mitzvot that are mentioned.

Which of these mitzvot are 'shared' by all (or most) of the other chagim as well, and which of these mitzvot are unique for that specific chag?

Attempt to explain the reason for each mitzvah?

As you study this chapter, make note as well when there is a new "dibur" and attempt to explain why each one is necessary.

5. Note that every holiday in Parshat Emor includes the commandment "v'hikravtem ishe l'Hashem". Scan the parsha to verify that this is indeed true, and if there are any 'exceptions'.

What "ishe" (offering) does the Torah refer to in this phrase:

- a private korban from each individual, or
- a korban TZIBUR (from the entire congregation)?

Can you relate this commandment to the description of the chagim in Parshat Pinchas (see Bamidbar chapters 28->29)?

Relate in your answer to Vayikra 23:37! [See Ramban 23:1-2]

6. In addition to this general commandment to offer an "ishe", this unit also includes several examples of commandments to offer a very specific korban. As you review from 23:1-44; attempt to find such examples. Are these korbanot identical to the korbanot described in Parshat Pinchas, or are they different?

Can you explain their purpose and why they are different?

Do these specific korbanot that are detailed in Parshat Emor share any 'common denominator'? If so, explain what it is, and why?

7. Make a table listing all the holidays in this Parshat Emor. For each holiday, note its date (lunar and/or solar) together with the SPECIAL mitzvah for that chag. As you make your table, make note of either any historical or agricultural aspect relating to those chagim. [Relate to both the mitzvot that are mentioned in Emor, as well as the mitzvot for each holiday which you may be familiar with from other sources.]

In your opinion, does the mitzvah to sit in a succah (see 23:42-43) relate to the historical aspect of Succot (i.e. yetziat mitzraim) or to its agricultural aspect (i.e. temporary booths built by the farmers in the field collecting the harvest) - or both?

Quote psukim to support your answer. [Relate also to Succah 11b, "succah k'neged ananei kavod or succot mamash".]

8. While reviewing your table, see if you can identify any type of relationship between the mitzvot of each holiday and their lunar and solar dates. [You can refer to the parallel units of the chagim in Sefer Shmot and Sefer Devarim (chap. 16) to help answer this question.]

9. Which of the holidays are referred to as "moadim" and which are called "shabbatonim" (or "shabbat"), and which chagim are referred to as both? Be sure to note 23:11,15,16,24,32,39!.

In your answer, relate to the 'double' description of Succot in 23:33-43, noting the distinction between "moed" and "shabbaton" and their related mitzvot. Be sure that you can explain 23:37-39 and the use of the word "ach". [Attempt to relate this as well to the 'double header' in 23:1-3!]

In what manner does the final pasuk in chapter 23 complement the opening pasuk of this chapter?

10. Based on our shiurim thus far in Sefer Vayikra, why do you think that chapter 23 is included in this Sefer?

Does it relate to korbanot, to KEDUSHA, etc.?

Be sure to relate to the SPECIFIC mitzvot of the chagim (as well as the general mitzvot) that are detailed in this chapter.

PART III - PARSHANUT

STARTING ON 'SUNDAY' OR 'MOTZEI YOM TOV'?

1. A major debate exists concerning how to explain the pasuk that defines when we begin counting the OMER -"m'mochorat ha'shabbat" (see 23:11). In your opinion, why does the Torah refer to the first day of chag ha'matzot as a "shabbat".

Can you relate your answer to the questions in Part II above?

Relate to how each of the chagim in some manner or other is referred to as a "shabbat" or "shabbaton".

See Rashi, Ramban, Ibn Ezra & Chizkuni and Mesechet Menachot 61a.

Even though everyone agrees that shabbat is referring to the first day of yom-tov, each commentator offers a different reason

why. Try to explain each "parshan" and the reason for the machloket.

TRANSMITTING GOD'S LAWS

2. Read 21:1 (the opening pasuk of the Parsha). What is problematic about the 'wording' of this opening statement?

See Ramban on this pasuk, noting how he first quotes Rashi, then Ibn Ezra, and then offers his own opinion.

Explain each of these three approaches. Why do you think that Ramban does not agree with either Rashi or Ibn Ezra?

Finally, see Chizkuni on 21:1. In what manner is his pirush different? What does he learn from "smichut parshiot" between this pasuk and the last pasuk in Parshat Kedoshim?

WHERE DID HE COME FROM?

3. Read 24:10, how did you translate the opening phrase ["v'yatza ben isha yisraelit"] - i.e. what does "va'yatza" mean?

What are the different possibilities?

See Rashi - How does he understand this word?

What questions bother him based on this understanding?

[Relate to all the questions raised by the Midrash.] See Ibn Ezra & Ramban.

How do they translate "va'yatze"? Do they both offer the same pirush? [If not, how do they differ?]

[Note also how Ibn Ezra later explains the reason for the "smichut parshiot" here!]

Finally, see Chizkuni. How does he explain "va'yatza"?

In what manner is his pirush totally different than all of the others? Why does he refer to this as "pshat"?

b'hatzlacha,
menachem