

Emor (Speak to the Kohen)



Laws of the Kohen

This Torah portion gives the laws for the Kohanim, whose Divine service places upon them a particular responsibility to maintain higher standards of righteous behavior and purity.

Leviticus 21:1 And יהוה said to Moses, speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron ואמרת and you say to them, No priest will be defiled for the dead among his people. C-MATS

Question: What was Moses saying to the Kohen in addition to this command? The Torah cautions adults to regulate their own behavior, because the example they set will have an effect on the children who see them. (Chumash)

2 Except for his near kin, such as his mother and father and his son and daughter and brother, C-MATS

Question: What commandment is given here? Any Kohen cannot participate in a funeral unless it is a close family member, such as his wife, mother, father, child, brother, or virgin sister. (Chumash)

Question: What does this mean by “virgin sister”? This is a sister who is not married, even if she is engaged. As long as she is unmarried, she is still part of the Kohen's immediate family and he is required to participate in her funeral, as he is for all the relatives enumerated here. Once she is married, however, she is considered part of her new family with regard to the laws of contamination. (Chumash)

3 And his virgin sister, that is near to him, who has had no husband; for her he may be defiled. 4 He will not defile himself, because he is a chief (leader) among his people. 5 They will not make bald spots on their head or shave off the corner of their beards or make any cuttings (gashes) in their flesh.
C-MATS

Question: What is this commandment referring to? The priests were not to follow superstitious customs used among the Heathens in their mourning for the dead, particularly by the Chaldeans, and so by the Grecians; when Hephestion, one of Alexander's captains, died, he shaved his soldiers and himself, imitating Achilles in Homer; so the Egyptians, mourning for the loss of Osiris, annually shaved their heads; and the priests of Isis, mourning for her lost son, are called by Minutius Felix her bald priests; neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard: the five corners of it; This the Israelites in common might not do, and particularly their priests; though the Egyptian priests shaved both their heads and beards, as Herodotus relates: and so they are represented in the Table of Isis: nor make any cuttings in their flesh; either with their nails, tearing their cheeks and breasts, or with an instrument cutting their flesh in any part of their bodies, as was the custom of Heathen nations; such were made by the Egyptians in their mourning. *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.*

Question: How did one usually mourn the dead? A person would let his hair grow for thirty days and tear his garments in mourning, but the Kohen is not allowed to enter into these practices. (Chumash)

Question: How are the Kohanim different from others? They must be righteous before יהוה. This implies abstinence and is particularly relevant to Kohanim who are forbidden from contaminating themselves from the dead and from marrying certain women. They are servants of יהוה, and for them to neglect or derogate their role is a desecration of יהוה's Name. The Torah indicates that a Kohen who falls short of righteousness is guilty of desecrating יהוה's Name. Because a Kohen is the servant of יהוה, he must be scrupulous in his behavior; when he sins, it is regarded by onlookers as a desecration of the One against Whom he transgresses. A similar responsibility applies to all יהוה's Chosen People -- and especially those who are privileged to be Torah scholars -- must hold themselves to higher standards of behavior and ethics. (Chumash)



The Sacred Name

Discuss: What standards are you held to as believers in comparison to the rest of the world?

6 They will be set apart to their Elohim and not profane the name of their Elohim: *because* אֶת־offerings made by fire to יְהוָה *and* the bread of their Elohim; they do offer therefore, will be holy (*set apart/sacred*). 7 They will not take a wife *who is* a whore or who *has been* profaned or a divorced woman: *because he is* sacred to his Elohim. C-MATS

Question: What woman is a Kohen not allowed to marry? A harlot is one who is living with a mamzer (born out of wedlock) or a non-Israelite, or who has had sexual relations with a close relative as forbidden by the law. A Kohen may not marry a divorcee or a widow, or any daughters born of such unions. If a Kohen marries one of these women, however, the marriage is binding. (Chumash)

8 You shall sanctify him therefore; for אֶת־ *the* bread of your Elohim he offers: he shall be holy to you: for I יְהוָה, which sanctify you, *am* sacred. 9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the whore, she profanes אֶת־ her father: she shall be burnt with fire. 10 And the high priest among his brothers upon whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated אֶת־ to put on אֶת־ the garments, אֶת־ his head, he will not uncover or tear his clothes; 11 Nor will he go near any dead body or defile himself for his father or his mother; 12 Nor will he go out of the sanctuary *then* or profane אֶת *the* sanctuary of his Elohim; for the crown of *the* anointing oil of his Elohim *is* upon him: I *am* יְהוָה. C-MATS



Question: When is a Kohen allowed to contaminate himself for the sake for the dead person? He can contaminate himself for the sake of a dead person who has no one to care for him and he must bury him. (Chumash)

13 And he will take a wife in her virginity. 14 A widow or a divorced woman or one who was profaned or a harlot, אֵת these he will not take as a wife: but he will take a virgin from his own people as a wife. 15 Nor will he profane his posterity among his people: because I יהוה do sanctify him. C-MATS

Question: Who is a Kohen Gadol allowed to marry? A Kohen Gadol is forbidden to marry anyone but a virgin, but this does not mean that he is required to marry. He can choose not to marry. As long as the woman is a member of the Israelite people, a Kohen Gadol may marry her; she need not be of a Levite family. If a Kohen Gadol marries any other woman, then the children are desecrated and cannot eat any of the offerings. (Chumash)

Question: How will the Kohen be sanctified if he does not divorce a desecrated woman? Against his will-[meaning], that if he refuses to divorce such a woman, lash him and chastise him until he divorces her. (Chumash)

16 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 17 Speak to Aaron saying, If any of your descendants in all generations has any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his Elohim. 18 If any man has a blemish, he will not approach: a blind man, a lame, or one who has a disfigured face, or anything deformed, 19 Or a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, 20 Or hunchback or a dwarf or one who has a blemish (cataract) in his eye or has scurvy or scabbed or has his testicles crushed; 21 No man that has a blemish from the descendants of Aaron will come near to offer אֵת the offerings of יהוה made by fire: he has a blemish; he אֵת the bread of his Elohim will not come near to offer. 22 He will eat the bread of his Elohim, both the most sacred and the sacred. 23 Only he will not go behind the veil or come near to the altar, because he has a blemish; so he does not profane אֵת My sanctuaries: because I יהוה do sanctify them. 24 And Moses told this to Aaron and to his sons and to all the Children of Israel. C-MATS

Question: What happens if a Kohen has a defect? Although a Kohen with a defect may not perform the service, he has the privilege of eating meat from the sacrifices. If a defective Kohen performs the service, the offering becomes desecrated, and must be burned. The Hebrew Kohen were the 'elite force' in the Sacred Temple, who got to do and see amazing things that nobody else could. Yet with their privileges came the responsibility of maintaining a higher level of discipline than the rest of the Hebrew people - in what they could eat, wear, and do. They understood, and we can too, that the greater a person wants to become, the more disciplined he must be to get there. (Chumash)

Question: How do you become self-disciplined? Self-discipline is the number one trait needed to accomplish goals, lead a healthy lifestyle, and ultimately, be happy.

1- Gratitude We spend far too much time wanting things. The habit of gratitude helps move us away from constantly wanting what we don't have, and towards appreciating what we do have. Spend 10 minutes every day writing out all the things that you're grateful for. Even if you feel you have nothing to be grateful for, find something. Seek and you shall find. **1 Thessalonians 5:18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of Elohim in Mashiach Y'shua concerning you. C-MATS**

2- Forgiveness When we spend a large portion of our days in a state of anger, regret, or guilt, we create more problems than we do solutions. Hate and anger consumes far more energy than love and forgiveness. When we forgive, we learn to let go of certain things.

Ephesians 4:32 And be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as Elohim for Mashiach's sake has forgiven you. C-MATS

3 – Praying helps to put our minds at peace. When we pray we draw closer to Elohim. We become stronger and unmovable. We are able to trust Him and have no fears. **Isaiah 26:3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. C-MATS**

4 – Active Goal Setting To set active goals, write them down. First you must set some long-term goals. If you have long-term goals, then you need to engage in monthly, weekly, and daily goal setting and planning. And you also have to actively track your progress towards your goals. Every morning, create some daily goals for yourself and identify the most important tasks that need to be done in the day, and then achieve your goals daily. **Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of Elohim in Mashiach Y'shua. C-MATS**

5 – Eat Healthy What most people don't realize is that the human body spends a large portion of its energy processing and digesting foods (10-25% of it). When the diet is rich in carbohydrates, fats, and even proteins, the body is using more energy to process that food, some of which is largely useless to us. The amount of energy we have plays a large role in how focused we are. When we're focused, we can approach our goals with discipline. Food can change the neurochemical makeup of the brain, and has a large influence on the mind-body connection. Opt for raw, healthy, and organic foods when you can and limit your intake of junk. **1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of Elohim. C-MATS**

6 – Sleep is directly connected with our ability to discipline ourselves. And getting the proper amount of sleep is a vital prerequisite to getting anything done. When we don't get enough sleep, it affects our mood, ability to focus, our judgment, our diet, and our overall health. It's important to get at least 6 hours of sleep, no matter what. Try not to drink too much caffeine at least 5 hours before bedtime, so that you don't interrupt your natural sleep cycle. Stay away from too many toxins throughout the day such as alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, or prescription medicine, if it can be avoided. **Psalm 127:2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for He gives to his beloved sleep. C-MATS**

7 – Exercise is a keystone habit. It acts as a cornerstone to a life filled with good and positive habits and free from bad habits. First, exercise reduces your levels of stress and pain by releasing endorphins and neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin. Second, exercise improves health by increasing blood flow and oxygenation of the body's cells, helping to fight off diseases and boost the immune system. And, of course, exercise increases our ability to focus on the task at hand, allowing us to lead a more disciplined life. To instill the habit of exercise in your life, start small. Begin by walking around the block for 5 minutes in the morning. Just 5 minutes. Do that for one week. Then, increase it to 10 minutes and do that for a week. And continue with this pattern. Eventually, exercise will become a full-blown habit. **Proverbs 24:5 A wise man is strong; yes, a man of knowledge increases might. C-MATS**

8 – Organization An organized life is a disciplined life. Start small if you label yourself as completely scattered. Begin by organizing one small space each day. For example, start by organizing your desk drawer. The next day, move onto organizing your medicine cabinet in your bathroom. And so on. Do one small thing a day to improve your organization. That's all it takes. **1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order. C-MATS**

9 – Time Management When we can properly manage our time, we have room for the things that matters. Namely, we have room for the activities that will help us achieve our goals. In order to achieve our long-term goals, we have to perform actions that might not be urgent, but are most certainly important. Since we all have the same amount of time in the day, we can't waste it. **Ephesians 5:15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of Adonai is. C-MATS**

10 – Persistence is that certain habit that helps us to not give up. Even when we do fail, it allows us to get back up again. Without the habit of persistence, self-discipline would be largely impossible. Why? Because achieving our goals is hard. Getting discouraged is easy. And giving up takes far less effort than continuing to push through, especially towards something that inflicts a lot of pain before it provides us with any pleasure. Failure is an important stepping-stone in life. Without failing, and failing big, we couldn't achieve the lofty goals that we set for ourselves. **Proverbs 24:16 For a righteous man fall seven times and rises up again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity. C-MATS**

Discuss: Do you want to become a greater person? Are you willing to discipline yourself to achieve your goals?



Question: "If someone tells you he has searched and he has found - believe him. If he says he has searched yet has not found - don't believe him. If he says that he hasn't searched and he hasn't found - believe him. If he says that he hasn't searched yet he has found - don't believe him." What does this mean, and what life-lesson can we learn from here? This wise saying teaches us an important life principle: you can't reach important goals unless you put in the necessary effort. Truly valuable things don't simply come easily on their own. Knowing this is a valuable tool to motivate a person to persevere until he makes his dream into reality.

Question: Must a person excel? Is there anything wrong with being mediocre? To really excel in a deeper sense means to use our full potential and become the best person that we can be. This is life's most worthwhile goal and within the reach of everyone. Failing to strive for excellence in this area would be a loss of a tremendous opportunity to fulfill our lives' spiritual task.

Spiritual Exercise: What is so important to you that you would be willing to work hard for it and even give up things you like to do to achieve it? Start this week on fulfilling your goal.



Jobs of the Priests

Leviticus 22:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, **2** Speak to Aaron and to his sons and *tell them* to separate themselves from the sacred things of *the* Children of Israel and My sacred *things* which they dedicate to Me, so they *do not* profane את name: I am יהוה. C-MATS

Question: Why must the Kohen be careful not to become contaminated? Whenever Kohanim become contaminated, they must withdraw from all aspects of the service, lest they contaminate and thereby disqualify the offerings that the Israelite people have sanctified. The penalty for those who serve while contaminated is death by the hand of Heaven. (Chumash)

Question: How can we desecrate the Name of יהוה? We are the great people of Israel, those who are crowned with distinction, and יהוה cautions us to be especially careful to avoid desecration of His Name. When we allow ourselves to take liberties not permitted to us but are taken by "unbelievers", we desecrate His Name. The Torah tells us that our responsibilities are greater than those of others. (Chumash)

Discuss: How are we like the Kohen? Doesn't Yahusha call us a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation? Are we not all Kohen? Should we keep all the commandments given to the Kohen to keep themselves pure?

3 Say to them, any man from all your descendants among your generations who approaches the sacred things, which *the* Children of Israel dedicate to יהוה, will have his uncleanness upon him and that soul will be cut off from My presence: I am יהוה. 4 Any man from the descendants of Aaron who is a leper or has a discharge will not eat from the sacred things until he is clean. And anyone who touches a person made unclean by a dead *body* or a man who has a seminal emission; 5 Or whoever touches any creeping thing that can make *him* unclean, or a man who is unclean for any reason; 6 The man who has touched any of *these things* will be unclean until evening and will not eat the sacred things, unless he washes his flesh with water. C-MATS

Question: How did the Kohen cleanse himself? He would immerse himself in the mikvah and after the sun had set, he was considered clean. (Chumash)

7 And at sunset, he will be clean and will then eat the sacred things; because it *is* his food. 8 He will not eat any animal that dies of *natural causes* or is torn by *wild* beasts to defile himself with it: I am יהוה. 9 They will keep את My ordinances, so that they will *not* sin and die if they profane it: I יהוה do sanctify them. 10 No stranger will eat of *the* sacred things: a tenant of the priest or a hired servant will not eat of *the* sacred things. 11 But if the priest buys a slave *with* his money, the slave can eat it and those who are born in his house can eat his meat. C-MATS

Question: Why can the slave eat of the offerings? If a child is born to an Israelite's gentile slave woman, both she and her offspring are the property of their master. The Kohen is responsible for feeding all those in his house. (Chumash)

12 If *the* priest's daughter is *married* to a stranger, she may not eat of the offerings of the sacred things. C-MATS

Question: When does a Kohen's daughter stop eating the Kohen's portion of the offerings? As long as she is single or married to another Kohen, she retains the privileges of the Levite family, and she may continue eating the offerings. If she marries a non-Kohen, she becomes part of her new family, and may no longer eat the offerings. If that marriage ends, through divorce or her husband's death, and there are no surviving children, she returns to the status of a Kohen's daughter, and may eat the offerings. But if she has surviving children -- who are themselves Levites or Israelites -- she retains her ties with her non-Kohan family and her status as a member of that family. (Chumash)

13 But if *the* priest's daughter is a widow or divorced and has no child and is returned to her father's house, like in her youth, she will eat her father's meat: but no stranger will eat the meat. 14 And if a man eats *the* sacred thing unintentionally, then he will add a fifth to it and will give it to the priest *with* את the sacred thing. 15 And the *priests* will not profane את sacred things from *the* Children of Israel, את which they offer to ליהוה; 16 Or suffer אתם *them* and bear the iniquity of *the* trespass, when they eat את their sacred things,: for I יהוה do sanctify them. C-MATS

17 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 18 Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all *the* Children of Israel ואמרת and you say to them, any man from *the* House of Israel or the strangers in Israel will offer his oblation (*offering*) for all his vows and all his freewill offerings, which they will offer to ליהוה for a burnt offering; 19 You will offer at your own will, a male without blemish from the beeves (*cattle*), the sheep, or the goats. 20 But whatever *has* a blemish, you will not offer: it will not be acceptable to you. C-MATS

Question: Why does יהוה require unblemished animals to be given as offerings to Him? Just as Kohanim with bodily blemishes are not permitted to perform the Divine service, so blemished animals are invalid as offerings. יהוה wants perfection from His servants in the spiritual and moral sense, and from His offerings in the physical sense. Even though a blemished animal may be larger and more valuable than an unblemished one, it is not, for יהוה does not measure perfection in monetary terms. (Chumash)

21 And whoever offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to יהוה to complete *his* vow or a freewill offering in cattle or sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there will be no blemish on it. 22 Blind, broken, maimed, or having an ulcer, scurvy, or scabbed, you will not offer these to ליהוה, or make an offering by fire with them upon the altar to ליהוה. 23 Either a bullock or a lamb that has anything deformed or lacking parts, you may offer אתו *him* for a freewill offering; but for a vow it will not be accepted. C-MATS

Question: When is a blemished animal accepted as an offering? You may make it a donation. A blemished animal may be contributed for its monetary value for the upkeep of the Temple. (Chumash)

24 You will not offer to ליהוה that which is bruised, crushed, broken, or cut; nor will you make any offering with it in your land. 25 And you will not receive any of these from a stranger to offer את the bread of your Elohim; because their corruption *is* in them and blemishes *are on* them: they will not be accepted from you. C-MATS

Question: Are you allowed to castrate an animal? Bruised or crushed or torn or cut testicles are forms of castration, which is forbidden in Israel or elsewhere. You should not castrate any livestock or wild animal, even of an unclean species. (Chumash)

Discuss: Neutering an animal is acceptable in many countries. Is it acceptable to יהוה?

26 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 27 When a bullock, sheep, or goat is brought as an offering, then it must stay with its mother for seven days and after the eighth day it will be accepted for an offering made by fire to ליהוה. C-MATS

Question: Why is the animal required to stay eight days with its mother before it can be sacrificed? Just as a Sabbath must go by before a boy is circumcised, an animal must live through a Sabbath before it can be used for a sacred purpose. Because it bears testimony to יהוה as the Creator, the Sabbath gives spiritual validity to the entire universe. (Chumash)

28 And whether it be a cow or ewe (sheep) אתו *it (him)* וְאֶת־ *and* her young you will not kill *both* in one day. 29 And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to לַיהוָה, offer *it in a way that it will be accepted*. 30 On the same day it must be eaten; you will leave none of it until the next day: I am יהוה. 31 You will keep My commandments and do אתם *them*: I am יהוה. 32 You will not profane את־ name, My sacred; but I will be sanctified among *the Children of Israel*: I am יהוה who sanctifies you, 33 That brought אתכם *you* out of the land of Egypt, to be your Elohim: I am יהוה. C-MATS

Question: What is our primary responsibility? The primary privilege and responsibility of every Israelite, great or small, is to sanctify יהוה's Name through his behavior, whether among Israelites or among gentiles -- by studying Torah and performing the commandments, and by treating others kindly, considerately, and honestly, so that people say of him, "Fortunate are the parents and teachers who raised such a person." Conversely, there is no greater degradation for an Israelite than to act in a way that will make people say the opposite. If someone sins merely because יהוה's will does not matter to him, he has desecrated the Name, and if he does so before others, he has committed the far more serious sin of desecrating the Name in public. Conversely, if someone withdraws from sin or performs a commandment not because of money, pressure, or honor, but solely because it is יהוה's will, he has sanctified the Name. Of a person who obeys the Torah and whose general behavior brings credit to his belief in יהוה, יהוה says (Isaiah 49:3), "You are My servant, Israel, in whom I take pride." (Chumash)

Question: What should you do if you have committed a sin? If one has transgressed, one must attempt to sanctify the Name in a manner similar to his sin. One who slandered others should study Torah using his gift of speech to utter the sacred words; one who used his eyes to gaze at forbidden sights, should weep; one who committed many sins should perform many good deeds as restitution. (Chumash)

Appointed Feast Days

Leviticus 23:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 2 Speak to *the Children of Israel* וְאָמַרְתָּ *and you say* to them *concerning* the feasts of יהוה, which you will proclaim אתם *them as sacred convocations, these are My feasts*. C-MATS

Question: What is the importance of a festival? The festivals, including the Sabbath, are referred to continuously as appointed times, because they are special days when Israelites "meet" with יהוה. These days summon us from our everyday life to halt and to dedicate all our spiritual activities to יהוה.

- Sabbath bears testimony that יהוה created heaven and earth.
- On Passover, we were granted the gift of freedom.
- On Shavuot, יהוה revealed Himself to us at Mount Sinai and gave us His Torah, the embodiment of His wisdom and will and our charter as His kingdom of Kohen and a sacred people.
- Rosh HaShanah is the day on which יהוה first became King.
- On Yom Kippur, יהוה forgave our first and most terrible betrayal as His people, the sin of the Golden Calf, granting us the gift of being able to rectify and transform a deficient past.
- Sukkot commemorates the time that we were sheltered and unified by the divine clouds of glory in our journey through the desert toward our Promised Land.

Question: Why did יהוה designate the times of festivals? יהוה designated the times of the festivals so that all of Israel will become accustomed to them, even those living in exiles will know when to celebrate יהוה's festivals. (Chumash)



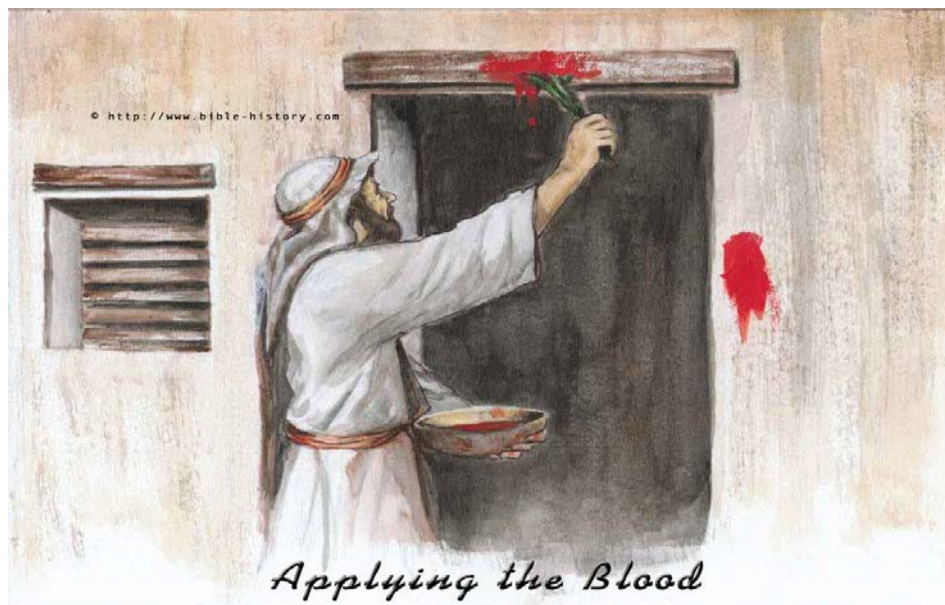
Sabbath

3 Six days work will be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath rest, a sacred convocation; you will do no work: it is the Sabbath to ליהוה in all your homes. 4 These are the feasts of יהוה, the sacred convocations which you will proclaim אתם them at their designated times. C-MATS

Passover-Pesach

5 On the full moon on the fourteenth day of the first month at evening (between sunset/darkness) is יהוה Passover. C-MATS

Question: What does Passover mean? The night of the first Passover was the night of the tenth plague. On that night, יהוה told the Israelites to sacrifice a spotless lamb and mark their doorposts and lintels with its blood. Then, when יהוה passed through the nation, He would “pass over” the households that showed the blood. The blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from death, as it kept the Destroyer from entering their homes. This was a foreshadow of the salvation of the Blood of the Lamb (Yahusha).





Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matzos)

6 On the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to לִיקוּחַ: seven days you must eat unleavened bread. C-MATS



7 In the first day you will have a sacred convocation: you will do no ordinary work in it. C-MATS

Question: What is “ordinary” work? Any types of work that are considered by you as labor and necessities, where a monetary loss may be incurred if one would refrain from them, for example, something that will be lost if the activity is postponed. Work that is a burden, such as ordinary labor that is in a factory and field. Only such work is forbidden on festivals, but "pleasurable work," such as preparation of food, is permitted. The preparation of food, including such labors as slaughter and cooking, is permitted on festivals that fall on weekdays (High Sabbaths). (Chumash)

8 But you will offer an offering made by fire to ליהוה for seven days: on the seventh day is a sacred convocation: you will do no ordinary work. 9 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 10 Speak to the Children of Israel ואמרת and you say to them, When you have come into the land which I give to you and will reap את harvest of the land, then you will bring את a sheaf from the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest: 11 And he will wave את the sheaf before יהוה to be accepted for you: on the morrow (*next day*) after the Sabbath the priest will wave it. C-MATS

Question: What offering must a farmer make before he can eat from his grain crop? Before any grain produce of the new crop may be eaten, a measure of ground barley must be brought to the Temple on the second day of Pesach as a meal offering, symbolizing that the prosperity of the field -- despite the backbreaking labor that is required to extract it from the soil -- is a gift from יהוה, and we thank Him for it. This offering is known as the Omer. Once it is brought, all grain that had taken root prior to that time may be eaten; later grain must wait until the next year's Omer is brought. Nowadays, in the absence of the Temple, the new crop may be eaten when the second day of Pesach is over. (Chumash)

12 And you will offer on the day that you wave את the sheaf a male lamb without blemish in the first year for a burnt offering to ליהוה. C-MATS

Question: What is the symbolism in Leviticus 23:11-12 in regard to the sheaf which is waved before יהוה Father on First Fruits? This is a type and foreshadow of את Yahusha our Messiah that He fulfilled after the resurrection as the wave offering. On this day a male lamb is also offered before יהוה Father. C-MATS

13 And the grain offering brought with it must be two tenths deals (*one gallon*) of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to ליהוה for a sweet savor: and the drink offering brought with it will be the fourth part of a hin (*one quart*) of wine. 14 And you will eat no bread, parched corn, or green ears until the day that you have brought את an offering to your Elohim: it will be a law forever throughout all your generations in all your homes. C-MATS

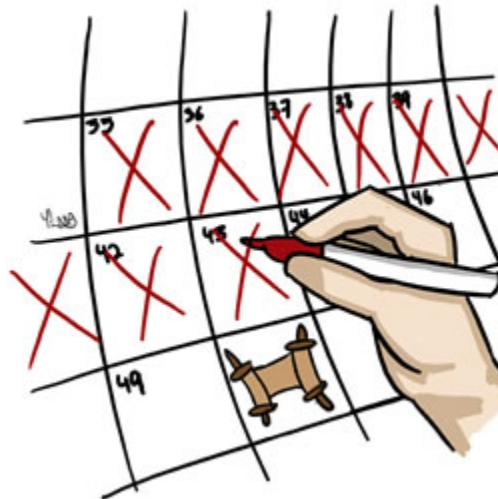
Penecost-Shavu'ot

15 And you will count from the next day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought את the sheaf of the wave offering; you are to count seven complete Sabbaths (*weeks*). C-MATS



Wave Offering

Question: How is Shavuot (Weeks) different from the other festivals? Unlike all the other festivals, Shavuot is not identified as a specific day in the calendar, but as the fiftieth day after the Omer-offering. Beginning on the second day of Passover, when the Omer is brought, forty-nine days are counted, and the next day -- the fiftieth -- is Shavuot. This recalls the days in the Wilderness immediately after the Exodus, when the Israelite people excitedly counted the days, each day improving and elevating themselves, so that they would be worthy of receiving the Torah. The fact that Shavuot does not have a calendar date of its own, but is attached to Passover by the seven-week count, symbolizes that the freedom of Passover is significant as the prelude to the giving of the Torah. The count does not begin on the first day of Passover, because that day is reserved for celebration of the Exodus and its miracles, for that event established undeniably that יהוה alone controls nature and changes it at will to suit His purposes.



Count 50 days

16 Until the day after the Sabbath, the seventh you will number (*count*) fifty days and you will offer a new grain offering to ליהוה. 17 You will bring from your homes two wave loaves made of two tenth deals (*one gallon*) of fine flour; they must be baked with leaven; *they are* the firstfruits to יהוה. 18 And you will offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish one year old and one young bullock and two rams: they will be a burnt offering to ליהוה, along with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire, a sweet savor to ליהוה. 19 Then you will sacrifice one male goat לַחַטָּאת for sin [offering] and two lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. 20 And the priest will wave אתם them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before יהוה, with the two lambs: they will be sacred to ליהוה for the priest. 21 And you will proclaim on the same day a sacred convocation for you: you will do no ordinary work: it will be a law forever in all your homes throughout all your generations. 22 And when you reap את־ the harvest of your land, you will not reap the פְּאֵת edges of your field when you harvest or gather any gleanings (ears of grain left by the harvesters) of your harvest: you will leave אתם them for the poor and the stranger: I am יהוה your Elohim. C-MATS

Question: What should one do during the days of Shavuot? The days after Shavuot, the festival of reaping, are spent sharing one's prosperity with the poor. (Chumash)



A woman giving her grain to the poor

Question: Where is Yahusha found in Passover and Shavuot? Yahusha became "our Passover (Lamb who) was sacrificed for us." **"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Mashiach our Passover is sacrificed for us"**1 Corinthians 5:7. And when He was resurrected, He ascended into heaven to the throne of יהוה the Father as our High Priest to present His blood as the sin offering to obtain eternal redemption for us, and as the wave sheaf offering, representing the first of the firstfruits of יהוה's spiritual harvest. **But now is Mashiach risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 1 Corinthians 15:20 C-MATS**

Feast of Trumpets- Rosh HaShanah



23 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 24 Speak to *the* Children of Israel saying, In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you will have a Sabbath (*Feast of Trumpets*), a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a sacred convocation. 25 You will do no ordinary work: but you will offer an *offering* made by fire to ליהוה. C-MATS

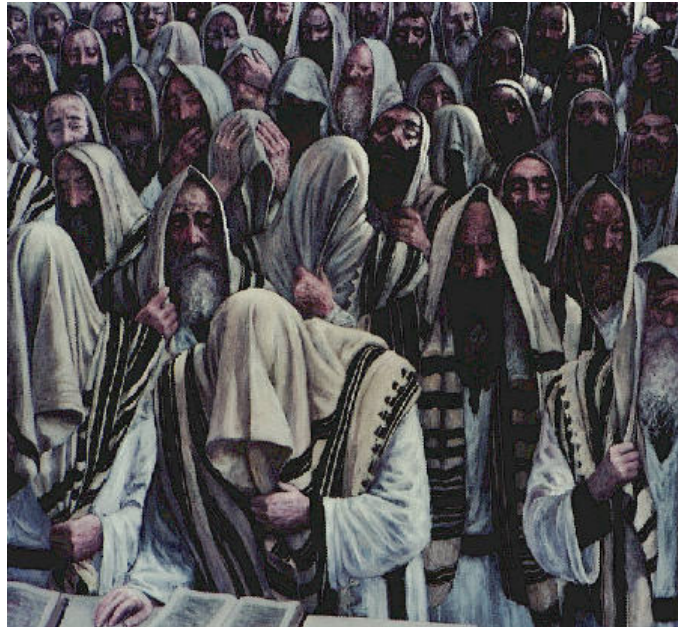
Question: Why is the shofar blown on Rosh Hashanah? This is the Day of Judgment. The shofar is a call of repentance. The shofar calls out: "Awake, you sleepers, from your sleep! Arise, you who slumber from your slumber! Repent with remorse! Remember your Creator!...Peer into your souls, improve your ways and your deeds..." (Chumash)

Day of Atonement- Yom Kippur

26 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 27 On the tenth *day* of this seventh month *there will be* a Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*): it will be a sacred convocation for you; and you will afflict את your souls and offer an *offering* made by fire to ליהוה. C-MATS

Question: What does it mean by "afflict את your souls"? This means fasting.

Question: Why was the tenth day of this seventh month called a day of atonement? Moses came down from Mount Sinai on the tenth of Tishrei with the second Tablets of the Law, signifying that יהוה had forgiven the nation for the sin of the Golden Calf. Because of that, יהוה made that day Yom Kippur, an eternal day of forgiveness, when the Evil Inclination loses its grip on Israelites and they are elevated to the level of the ministering angels. (Chumash)



Question: How do you sanctify the Day of Atonement? You are to sanctify the day through wearing clean garments (your best garments) and through prayer. (Chumash)

Question: Does Day of Atonement cover all sins? Yom Kippur atones for those who repent, “but” it does not atone for those who do not repent. (Chumash)

28 And you will do no work on that day: because it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before יהוה your Elohim. 29 Whoever does not afflict (deny) himself on that day, he will be cut off from among his people. C-MATS

Question: What are the punishments for those who do not observe Yom Kippur? According to the view that not all forms of punishment are the same, we can infer from the two expressions that one who works on Yom Kippur, about whom the Torah says he will be destroyed, is judged more harshly than one who eats, about whom the Torah says only that he will be cut off. One who eats is treated more leniently, because he is merely a glutton who cannot control his desires, but one who works shows that he is contemptuous of יהוה's wishes. (Chumash)

30 And whoever does any work on that same day, I will destroy את־this soul from among his people. 31 You will do no type of work: it will be a law forever throughout your generations in all your homes. 32 It will be a Sabbath of rest and you will afflict (deny) את־your souls: in the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you will celebrate your Sabbath. C-MATS

Question: How is Yom Kippur different from other feast days? When we deny ourselves (*fast*) on the High Sabbath of Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), אֵת Yahusha Messiah becomes associated with our affliction, as does יהוה Father within our soul and feels our sacrifice of repentance on this most sacred day of the year. This is the power of covenant with the Yah-head. C-MATS

Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)-Sukkot

33 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 34 Speak to the Children of Israel saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month will be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to ליהוה. C-MATS

Question: Why do we celebrate the Feast of Booths? The Festival of Booths commemorates the shelter that יהוה provided the Israelite people in the Wilderness, and an essential part of the Sukkot service is to recall that shelter. Succoth is a time to rejoice in יהוה's concern for us and be grateful for the blessing of the harvest. (Chumash)



35 On the first day will be a sacred convocation: you will do no ordinary work. 36 Seven days you will offer an offering made by fire to ליהוה: on the eighth day will be a sacred convocation for you; and you will offer an offering made by fire to ליהוה: it is a solemn assembly; and you will do no ordinary work. C-MATS

Question: Why does יהוה call an assembly on the eighth day? יהוה says to Israel, “I have called you to an assembly to remain with Me.” This is like a king who invited his sons to feast with him for a certain number of days, and when the time came for them to leave, he said: “My sons! Please, stay with me just one more day, for it is difficult for me to part with you!” Similarly, after the seven days of Sukkot, יהוה “detains” Israel for one extra sacred day. Only on this eighth day is work prohibited, and not on the preceding weekdays of the Festival, when such work, which, if postponed, would cause a monetary loss, is permitted. (Chumash)

37 These *are* the feasts of יהוה, which you will proclaim אתם *them to be* sacred convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to ליהוה, a burnt offering, a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, each on its own day: *Prophecy Fulfilled-Lev.23:36-37 The Drink-offering: "If any man thirst." John 19:31-36.* 38 Beside the Sabbaths of יהוה and besides your gifts and all your vows and all your freewill offerings, which you give to ליהוה. 39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in את־ the fruit of the land, you will keep את־ a feast (*Sukkot*) to יהוה *for seven days: on the first day will be a Sabbath and on the eighth day will be a Sabbath.* 40 And you will take on the first day choice fruits, branches of palm trees, thick tree *branches and* intertwined willow *branches* from the brook; and you will rejoice before יהוה your Elohim seven days. C-MATS

Question: What is needed for the Feast of Tabernacles? Choice fruits, palm branches, tree branches, and willow branches intertwined together.

Question: How are the intertwined branches used during the Feast of Tabernacles? **Rejoice before יהוה your Elohim seven days. C-MATS**



41 And you will keep אתו *it (him)* a feast to ליהוה *for seven days in the year. It will be a statute forever in all your generations: in the seventh month you will celebrate אתו it (him).* 42 You will live in booths (*Sukkah*) seven days; all that are Israelites native-born *in the land* will live in booths (*Sukkah*) C-MATS

Question: What does “native-born *in the land*” mean? Native refers to born in Israel.

Question: How [does one fulfill] the commandment of dwelling in the Sukkoth? One should eat, drink, and live in the Sukkoth, both day and night, as one lives in one's house on the other days of the year. For seven days a person should make his home his temporary dwelling, and his Sukkoth his permanent dwelling. (Chumash)

43 So that your generations may know that in booths, I made dwell את־ Children of Israel to live, when I brought אותם them out of the land of Egypt: I am יהוה your Elohim. 44 And declared Moses את־ the feasts of יהוה to the Children of Israel. C-MATS

Question: What were the booths that the children of Israel lived in while in the desert? These were the clouds of glory with which יהוה enveloped the Hebrew people in the desert, forming a protective shelter for them against wild beasts and enemies. (Chumash)

Leviticus 24:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 2 Command את־ Children of Israel to bring to you pure olive oil beaten for the menorah to cause the lamps to burn continually. 3 Outside the veil of the testimony in the Tabernacle of the Congregation shall order אתו it (him) Aaron the menorah to burn from the evening to the morning before יהוה: it will be a law forever in all your generations. 4 He will keep in order את־ the lamps upon the pure menorah before יהוה continually. C-MATS



The lights of the Menorah will burn continually.

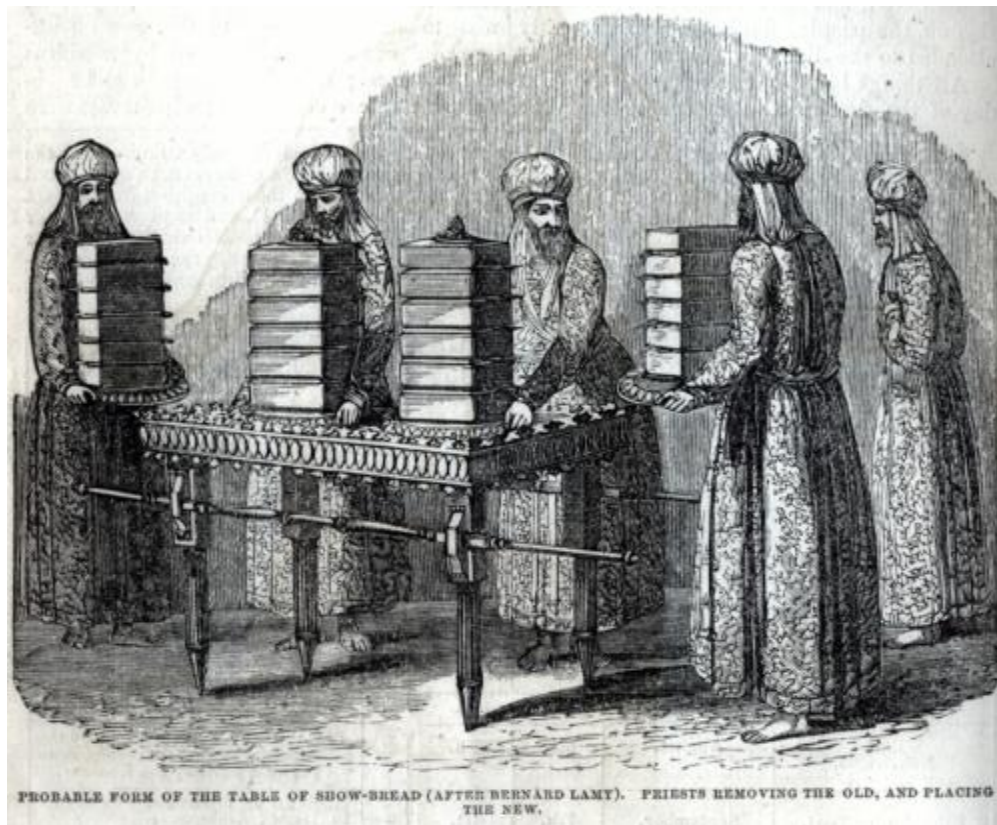
Question: What was different about the Pure Gold Menorah and the other lamps in the Temple? During times when the Israelite people were worthy, a miracle happened and the Menorah never went out. The eternally burning Menorah was proof of יהוה's Presence in the Temple. After the time of Shimon HaTzaddik, who was a Kohen Gadol during the early years of the Second Temple, the people were no longer worthy of such a miracle, and the Menorah would go out like all the other lamps. (Chumash)

5 And you will take fine flour and bake אתה *it (her)* twelve cakes: two tenth deals (*1 gallon*) will be in *the one* cake. 6 And you will set אותם *them in* two rows, six on a row, upon the pure gold table before יהוה. C-MATS

Question: When was the show-bread set on the table? Every Friday, twelve large loaves were baked. They were placed on the Table on the Sabbath, and a large spoon of frankincense was placed on top of each stack. The old breads were divided among the Kohanim and eaten. Miraculously, the breads remained fresh all week. (Chumash)

7 And you will put pure frankincense upon *each* row that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to ליהוה. 8 Regularly every Sabbath Day he shall set it in order before יהוה continually, being taken מאת *from the* Children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9 And *they belong to* Aaron and his sons; and they will eat it in the sacred place: it is most sacred to him from the offerings of יהוה made by fire by a permanent law. C-MATS

Question: What does the show-bread symbolize? The loaves are likened to the Sabbath, which is also called an eternal covenant. The Sabbath covenant forbids work and ordains that one enjoy his food without worrying where his livelihood will come from, because the Sabbath brings its own store of blessing for the following week. So, too, the show-bread symbolizes that יהוה provides prosperity for his servants. (Chumash)



Priests replacing the old showbread with the new unleavened bread

10 There was a son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian and he went out among the Children of Israel: and this son of the Israelite woman and a man of Israel fought together in the camp; 11 And blasphemed the woman's son of the Israelite אתה the Name and cursed. And they brought אתו him to Moses: and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri from the tribe of Dan: 12 And they put him in custody until יהוה showed them what to do. C-MATS

Question: Who was the father of the blasphemer? What was his mother's name and of which tribe was she? The blasphemer was supposedly to have been the son of the Egyptian that Moses killed. His mother was Shelomith, and she was from the tribe of Dan. (Chumash)

Question: Why did the men quarrel? The man, son of an Israelite mother from the tribe of Dan and an Egyptian father, had come to pitch his tent within the encampment of the tribe of Dan. So this tribe said to him, "What right do you have to be here?" Said he, "I am of the descendants of Dan," claiming lineage through his mother, who was from the tribe of Dan. They said to him, "The children of Israel shall encamp each man by his grouping according to the insignias of his father's household," thereby refuting his maternal claim. The court of Moses ruled in favor of Dan, whereupon the man uttered his curse and blasphemed. This Name was the explicit four-letter Divine Name that this man had heard from the revelation at Mount Sinai. (Chumash)

Question: What does her name mean? Shelomith denotes that she was a chatterbox. She would chatter about with words, greeting everyone. The daughter of Dibri denotes that she was very talkative, talking with every person. That is why she fell into sin and married an Egyptian. (Chumash)

Question: Why was the name of the tribe mentioned "from the tribe of Dan"? This tells us that a wicked person brings disgrace to himself, disgrace to his father (family), and disgrace to his entire tribe. Likewise, the converse is true regarding a righteous man. "And has also given Aholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. 35 (יהוה) Has filled אתם them with the skill needed for all manner work, by the engraver, the skillful workmanship of the embroiderer in blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen of the weaver; they have the skill for every kind of work and design." Exodus 35:34. Oholiab brought about praise to himself, praise to his father, and praise to his entire tribe. (Chumash)

13 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 14 Bring אתה him who has cursed outside the camp; and lay, all that heard him אתה their hands upon his head and let all the assembly stone אתו him. C-MATS

Question: Who decreed the punishment for the blasphemer, and who carried it out? יהוה decreed the punishment and the whole congregation carried it out. He was stoned by the witnesses in the presence of the entire community. (Chumash)

15 And you will speak to the Children of Israel saying, Whoever curses his Elohim will bear the consequences of his sin. 16 And he that blasphemes the name of יהוה will be put to death and all the congregation will stone him: the stranger and he who are born in the land, when he blasphemes the Name he will be put to death. 17 And he who murders any man will be put to death. 18 And he who kills a beast will make restitution; beast for beast. C-MATS

Question: How does one replace an animal that he killed? One who killed an animal must pay its market value.

19 And if a man injures his neighbor; as he has done, so it will be done to him; 20 Break for break, eye for eye and tooth for tooth: as he has injured a man, so will it be done to him. C-MATS

Question: Does this verse really mean to wound “eye for eye”? This does not mean the actual infliction of a wound, but payment of money. The victim is evaluated as a slave if he would not have had the injury, and how much with the injury, and the difference is the compensation. This is why Scripture uses the expression “giving,” alluding to something that is “handed over” from hand to hand. These penalties are to be understood as monetary payment for the damages. For example, a singer with a mangled finger would lose little of his value, but a pianist would lose a considerable part of his value if he lost the use of his finger. (Chumash)

21 And he who kills a beast, he will restore it: and he who murders a man, he will be put to death. 22 You will have the same kind of judgment for the stranger as you would for one of your own country: I am יהוה your Elohim. C-MATS

Question: Are there two sets of laws-one for the native born Israelite and one for the convert? No, each person that serves יהוה must keep the same set of laws no matter where you live. (Chumash)

23 And Moses spoke to the Children of Israel to bring him את־ who had cursed out of the camp and stone אתו him with stones. And the Children of Israel did as commanded יהוה את־ Moses. C-MATS



The witnesses stone the blasphemer.

Do you know?

1. The priests were not allowed to defile themselves by coming in contact with ____.
2. A priest is forbidden to marry a divorced ____, harlot, widow, or profaned woman.
3. The High Priest must marry a ____ daughter of Israel.
4. All Priests are from the tribe of _____.
5. An animal must be ____ days old before it is sacrificed to יהוה.
6. The first feast day mentioned in this Torah lesson is _____.
7. The feast day that takes place in the first month is _____.
8. The Israelites celebrated Rosh HaShanah by blowing the _____.
9. Yom Kippur is a day of _____ and repenting of your sins.
10. During the Feast of Tabernacles, you should wave the ____ branches in praise to יהוה.
11. All ____ Israelites should celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.
12. During the Feast of Tabernacles, you should live in ____ for 8 days.
13. The lights of the Menorah would burn _____.
14. On the Table of Showbread was placed ____ large loaves of bread in ____ rows.
15. On top of each row of the showbread was placed _____.
16. The Showbread was replaced every _____.
17. When a farmer reaped his harvest, he was required to leave part of the corner of the field and the gleanings for the ____ and _____.
18. The man, son of an Israelite mother from the tribe of ____ and an Egyptian father, blasphemed the name of יהוה.
19. The man who blasphemed the name of יהוה was punished by _____.
20. The ____ carried out the punishment for the man who blasphemed.
21. If a man injures his neighbor, he must pay restitution in _____ not eye for eye.
22. The first fruits of the harvest were given to the priest for a wave offering in the feast of _____.

Answers

1. dead bodies
2. woman
3. virgin
4. Levi
5. seven
6. Shabbat
7. Passover
8. trumpets
9. Fasting
10. palm
11. native-born
12. booths (sukkah)
13. continuously
14. 12, 2.
15. frankincense
16. Sabbath
17. poor, strangers
18. Dan
19. stoning
20. witnesses
21. money
22. Pentecost-Shavu'ot

Haftorah

In this week's Haftorah, Ezekiel prophesies about the service of the Kohen in the third Sacred Temple, which will be rebuilt in the Last Days.

Ezek 44:15 But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept **את** charge of My sanctuary when *the* Children of Israel went astray from Me, they will come near to Me to minister to Me and they will stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood, said Adonai **יהוה**: **16** They will enter into My sanctuary and they will come near to My table, to minister to Me and they will keep **את** My charge. **17** And it will come to pass, *that* when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they will be clothed *with* linen garments; and no wool will come upon them while they minister in the gates of the inner court and within. **18** They will have linen bonnets upon their heads and will have linen breeches upon their loins; they will not gird *themselves* with anything that causes sweat. **19** And when they go forth into the outer court, *even* into the outer court to the people, they will put off **את** their garments which they ministered *in* and lay **אתם** *them* in the sacred chambers and they will put on other garments; and *that* they will not transmit holiness **את** the people through their garments. **20** Neither will they shave their heads, nor suffer their hair to grow long; they will only **את** trim their heads. C-MATS

21 Neither will any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court. 22 Neither will they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is divorced: but they will take maidens (*virgins*) of the descendants of *the* House of Israel, or a widow that had a priest *before*. 23 **וְאֶת־אֲנִי** *and My people they will teach the difference between the sacred and the profane and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.* 24 And in controversy (*disputes*) they will stand in judgment; according to My judgments *and they will judge it:* **וְאֶת־אֲנִי** *and My Torah* **וְאֶת־אֲנִי** *and My statutes in all My assemblies they will keep;* **וְאֶת־אֲנִי** *and My Sabbaths, they will sanctify.* 25 And they will come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that has had no husband, they may defile themselves. 26 And after he is cleansed, they will reckon to him seven days. 27 And in the day that he goes into the sanctuary, to the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he will offer **חַטָּאתוֹ** *his sin offering, said Adonai יהוה.* 28 And it will be to them for an inheritance: I *am* their inheritance: and you will give them no possession in Israel: I *am* their possession. 29 They will eat the grain offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel will be theirs. 30 And the first of all the firstfruits of all *things* and every oblation of all, of every *sort of* your oblations, will be the priests: You will also give to the priest the first of your ground grain, that he may cause a blessing to rest in your house. 31 The priests will not eat of anything that is dead of itself, or torn, whether *it is* fowl or beast. C-MATS

Brit Chadasha

Law of Retaliation: 1. Forgo your own "rights". You have no rights. When you became a disciple, you signed up to die to self. 2. Show your enemies kindness. Yahusha taught his disciples that instead of defending themselves or seeking retaliation, they must give to this person who is so unfairly attempting to take from them. This is supremely radical, but it is meant to point one's persecutors to Yahusha. When you love without limits, you become like Yahusha.

Matt 5:38 Yahusha said, **You have heard that it has been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'.** 39 **But I say to you, Do not resist (or retaliate against) an evil person: but whosoever shall slap you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.** (Slapping someone on the cheek was a sign of contempt and did not pose a serious safety threat. It was considered a terrible insult.) 40 **And if any man will sue you at the court, and take away your shirt, let him have your coat also.** (It was possible in Yahusha's day to sue others for the very shirt on their backs. However, no one could take another's cloak by law, because the cloak was used as a sleeping cover.) 41 **And whosoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two.** (Roman soldiers had the authority to force civilians to carry their loads for one mile.) 43 **"You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Love your neighbor — and hate your enemy.'** 44 **But I tell you, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!** 45 **Then you will become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun shine on good and bad people alike, and he sends rain to the righteous and the unrighteous alike.** 46 **What reward do you get if you love only those who love you? Why, even tax-collectors do that!** 47 **And if you are friendly only to your friends, are you doing anything out of the ordinary? Even the *Goyim* do that!** 48 **Therefore, be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.** C-MATS

Gal 3:26 For you are all the children of Elohim by faith in Mashiach Yahusha. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Mashiach have put on Mashiach. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Mashiach Yahusha.

29 And if you be Mashiach's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. C-MATS

1 Peter 2:4 To whom coming, as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of Elohim, and precious, 5 You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Elohim by Yahusha haMashiach. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on him shall not be confounded." 7 To you which believe he is precious: but to them who are disobedient, "the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner," 8 And "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," even to them who stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereto also they were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of Elohim: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. C-MATS

Take Responsibility

This week's Torah portion teaches that a person who hurts another or damages someone's property must take full responsibility and pay him for what he's done. Everyone makes mistakes and sometimes does things that aren't right. When that happens, the right thing to do is not to try to get off the hook, but to own up and face the consequences of our actions.

"WAKING UP IN TIME"

Jeff Sharp was having a lot of trouble sleeping. It was because he was so excited about the big trip he was taking the next day. He'd been waiting all year for the annual family get-together at their aunt and uncle's vacation home on the lake. They would be spending a great day of speed-boating, snorkeling, food and fun. As he lay in bed late at night, his mouth was feeling dry so he decided to get up and have a cold drink. The house was so quiet. He walked by his big brother, Steve's, room. Usually it was impossible to go by Steve without his brother insulting him or punching him. But now even Steve, like everyone else in the house, including his parents, were fast asleep. In the kitchen, he finished a glass of orange juice and got ready to trek back up to his room, when a delicious smell tickled his nose. Investigating, he discovered its source: a still-warm tray of the most amazing looking brownies he'd ever seen. His mom had been talking for days about these special double-fudge, triple-crunch cluster bars she was making to bring for everyone at the next day's festivities - and warning he and his siblings over and over again NOT to touch them. Jeff was an obedient kind of kid - not like his wild brother, Steve - so with his mom's warning still ringing in his ears, he put the napkin back over the tray and turned to go, when a little voice inside told him that nobody would mind, or even notice, if he just tasted the smallest little piece that was sticking to the corner of the baking pan and anyway couldn't be served. He popped the little piece in his mouth. *Wow! It tasted even better than it looked. Maybe just another tiny smidge...* Before Jeff knew it, three quarters of the tray was gone and he was in a panic! His mom was going to really hit the roof when she woke up and even worse - his parents were probably going to punish him by making him stay home and miss the outing!

He briefly considered trying to spread out the rest of the brownies to make the tray look full, but realized there was no way it would work. So he did the only sensible thing he could - he dove under his blankets and tried to disappear.

Morning came sooner than Jeff had hoped and sure enough he could hear his mother's angry voice from downstairs all the way from his room. "I can't believe he did this! After all my work! There is no way I can bring this tiny bit of crumbs that are left to the gathering." Then he heard his dad say firmly, "Well to learn his lesson I think he will just stay home today." *Oh no! They were really going to make me stay home!* Jeff thought to himself. Then his dad continued. "Steve has broken the rules one time too many. As soon as he wakes up and comes downstairs, I'll speak to him." Jeff couldn't believe it. They thought Steve did it. He was off the hook! He knew his brother; as soon as they accused him he would get all angry and just run into his room and slam the door. His parents would probably never even find out it was really him. Jeff felt like dancing. He wasn't going to get in trouble; he was going to get to go to the outing - and he wouldn't even have to deal with his rowdy brother all day! He jumped out of bed, not even feeling tired after staying up most of the night and started packing for the trip. *Let's see, swimming trunks, snorkel...* Then he started to think about Steve. He would miss out on a great day for no fault of his own. Plus he'd feel really bad that mom and dad thought he did it - he gets into trouble so much already. But on the other hand, how could he face his parents... and miss out on the trip? But on the other hand, he really *did* eat the brownies and maybe it was only fair that he'd have to pay the price... "I'm really sorry, Mom. It wasn't Steve, it was me. I don't know how I did it - but somehow I did. So," Jeff sighed, "I guess I'm the one who has to stay home." He glanced up from his hanging head and saw his parents looking at each other. They looked surprised and kind of angry, but kind of not angry too. His mom spoke. "Look, Jeff," she said, "it was really wrong of you to eat them after I told you not to." Jeff braced for what he was sure would come next: no trip. His mother continued. "But it was also really brave, mature and honest of you to own up to it - especially to save your brother from getting blamed. So we *are* going to let you come with us today, *but* you are grounded for a week and will have to clear the whole table by yourself and wash the dishes after every meal." Jeff nodded. He wasn't happy about the consequences he'd have to face - he hated clearing the table and washing the dishes- but deep down he felt good because he knew that admitting what he did was right, both for Steve's sake...and for his.

Question: What life lesson did Jeff learn from what happened? At first he had felt that the only problem with doing something wrong was that he might get caught and punished so when he heard that his brother was going to take the rap he was happy and relieved. But then he realized that it wasn't fair to cause his brother to be punished for no reason and that a person should really own up to what he did, even if he had to face the consequences.

Question: Do you think it would have been okay for Jeff not to have owned up in a case where no one else would have gotten into trouble if he didn't? Why or why not? While it wouldn't be as bad as causing someone else to be unjustly accused and punished, it still wouldn't have been right. Since he did it, it was only fair and right that he face the consequences. Also it would in the end make him feel better, because as much as it is unpleasant to face consequences, it is even more unpleasant to feel the guilt of having something to hide and not to have made amends.

Question: What should a person do who hurts another or damages someone's property? The person must take full responsibility and pay him for what he's done. Everyone makes mistakes and sometimes does things that aren't right. When that happens, the right thing to do is not to try to get off the hook, but to own up and face the consequences of our actions.

Question: Why do you think being willing to face consequences is a sign of maturity? A mature person realizes that life isn't about trying to 'get away' with things and get something for nothing, but rather about discovering true values and living by them. One of these values is to take responsibility for our actions and being willing to face consequences when necessary.

Question: Do you think a person can ever 'get away' with something and do something wrong without ever having to face the consequences? While sometimes it may look that way, it is really not so. Everything that we do, besides its immediate outside effects, also affects our character and our soul. יהוה wants us to perfect ourselves and part of that perfection is coming clean and facing up to the consequences of all of our choices. So יהוה sees to it that one way or the other, sooner or later a person will have to face up to things and it feels much better when we choose to do it ourselves.

Spiritual Exercise: This week take responsibility for your actions.

How to Excel

Who wouldn't love to excel - to experience and achieve more than most people ever do? It sounds exciting - and fun. Excelling requires making a commitment to a goal, and being ready to accept the responsibilities and restrictions necessary to get there. The Kohanim, or Hebrew Kohen, were the 'elite force' in the Sacred Temple, who got to do and see amazing things that nobody else could. Yet with their privileges came the responsibility of maintaining a higher level of discipline than the rest of the Hebrew people - in what they could eat, wear, and do. They understood, and we can too, that the greater a person wants to become, the more disciplined he must be to get there. *In our story, a boy shows his friends what it takes to excel.*

"KEEPING TRACK"

Stride ... huff ... stride ... Hal Landers breathed hard but steadily as his feet rhythmically hit the pavement as he dug his way up the steep hill. Hal was the captain of the Middletown School track team and he was training for the upcoming inter-state meet, where he would be representing his school in the grueling 5000-meter cross-country race. Though his muscles ached, the boy pushed himself on. He knew from experience that these pains meant his legs were growing stronger, and would bring him to a new level of running excellence. Just as he reached the top of the hill and turned the corner, Hal was surprised by the honking of a car horn. Looking up, he saw his friends Barry and Pete parked by the side of the road. "Hey Hal," Barry yelled out, "Where ya running to? Come rest a while and join us for an ice cream. My treat!" Although Hal was happy to see his friends, he knew that eating ice cream was the last thing he could be doing now. His strict diet and disciplined training schedule was rigorous, but it gave Hal just the fuel he needed to become one of the premier runners in the state. "Sorry guys" he said with a smile. "Ice cream isn't on my diet this week."

Hal's buddies looked at their slim-trim friend and then at each other. "You don't look like you belong on a diet to me," said Pete, "but have it your way. C'mon out with us anyway and shoot the breeze for a while."

Hal looked at his watch and frowned. He knew that getting to sleep early was a crucial part of his training regimen. "Sounds great but its almost my curfew. I've gotta get home." Barry's eyes popped open. "Such an early curfew? Boy, are your parents tough!" "You don't get it!" Hal laughed. "I put *myself* on the curfew and the diet so I'll have what it takes to win the big race on Tuesday." His friends had to admit that Hal's efforts had paid off. He was the best runner to come out of Middletown in years. But still, they had to ask, "Is it really worth it, Hal? All the effort and discipline?" Hal didn't miss a beat. "No question about it. The feeling I get when I'm running fast, when I win a race is unbelievable. It's not always easy, but like coach says 'no pain - no gain.' If I want to really be good, I can't just take it easy like everyone else. No offense guys, I'd love to hang out with you longer - but I've gotta run!"

Question: What does "no pain, no gain" mean? It means that to accomplish something great, a person has to discipline himself, even if it's difficult.

Question: Why do you think that Hal wouldn't take a short break from his training to hang out with his friends? Hal had a goal. He wanted to excel and become a top runner. Even though he would have enjoyed spending more time with his friends, he realized that to reach his goal he had to stay disciplined, even if it required sacrificing something he liked to do.

Question: If it were more comfortable to just take it easy, why would a person want to give it up and work hard at something? There are different levels of pleasure. While there is a certain pleasure to be had in taking it easy, it doesn't even compare to the greater pleasure we feel when we accomplish something important. Even though getting there almost always takes a serious effort, successful people who excel have discovered the secret that the gain is worth the pain. And in the long run, the pleasure we get from this is much greater than the pleasure of 'taking it easy.'

Resources:

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures **C-MATS** www.AlephTavScriptures.com

"Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com