

Parsha QA



Parshas Emor

For the week ending 13 Iyar 5758 *20 Iyar outside Israel
8 & 9 May 1998 *15 & 16 May outside Israel

Parsha Questions

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

Rashi never just comments; something in the text always impels him to do so. Rashi's comments are answers to unspoken questions and difficulties arising from a thoughtful reading of the Torah. Therefore, anyone who wants a true understanding of Rashi's classic Torah commentary must always ask

"What's Bothering Rashi?"

Sherlock Holmes

&

The Mystery of the Missing Father

Sherlock frowned. "Why should the father be killed along with its child?" he said.

"We've been breaking our heads for an hour and still no clue!" said Watson. "Let's have tea."

"Please," said Sherlock, "Read the verse again. Just once more."

Vatson sighed and peered into the text: "**A cow or sheep, it and its child you shall not slaughter on the same day (Vayikra 22:28).**"

"Go on," said Sherlock.

"Rashi says this refers only to the mother, but that one may slaughter the father and the child on the same day."

Sherlock took a long puff on his meerschaum pipe.

"I give up," said Watson. "I see nothing in the verse itself which excludes one of the parents! It's an 'equal

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opportunity' verse, referring to both mother and father. If there's a magic word which excludes the father, Rashi sees it; but I don't!"

Sherlox jumped. "Watson, repeat that!"

"Rashi sees it, but I..."

"That's it! Rashi sees it! Watson, you're a genius!"

"Now," said Watson, "I really need a tea..."

What does Sherlock see that Watson doesn't?

[Note: The Hebrew word *shor*, usually translated as "ox," includes both male and female; We therefore translate it "cow" which includes both male or female.]

Answer:

"Listen carefully," said Sherlock. "The verse could have said: 'A cow or sheep and its child.' Why, then, does it say: 'A cow or a sheep, *it* and its child'? The extra 'it' must exclude something. 'It' implies there's another category, a category that's "not it."

"I don't follow," said Watson.

"Let's say there's a crime. What the difference between saying "Gertrude did it," and "Gertrude, *she* did it."

"Ah! I understand," said Watson. "The word 'she' means 'as opposed to someone else.' It implies there's another suspect, someone who's now off the hook.

"Exactly. Here too, the word 'it' means we had another candidate, whom we are now excluding."

"Brilliant! Our mystery solved, from one tiny word!"

"Now, Watson, I'll let you tell me why we exclude the father, and not the mother."

"That shouldn't be hard," said Watson. "This verse teaches us to be sensitive. Since slaughtering mother and child is crueler than slaughtering father and child, how can we exclude her? Furthermore, this verse strongly parallels the verse: 'Do not take the mother (bird) with her young.' It's a related idea, and it refers to the mother. There's no such parallel regarding a father animal; in fact, there's no verse anywhere which refers to a father animal and its young."

"Precisely, dear Watson. Precisely."

• *Chullin 78b, Malbim*

• *Recommended Reading "What's Bothering Rashi?" by Dr. Avigdor Bonchek, Feldheim Publishers*

I Did Not Know That!

"The son of an Israelite woman went out — and he was the son of an Egyptian man ... and pronounced the Name of Hashem and cursed...." (24:10)

The "Egyptian man" above is the one Moshe struck dead by uttering Hashem's Name. Therefore, many years later, that Egyptian man's ill-begotten son blasphemed the Name of Hashem through which his father was killed.

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin in Oznaim Latorah

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

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

Sefer Hachinuch

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

Answers to this Week's Questions

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

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