A Kohen and the Marriage Bond

"And they shall not take a woman who is divorced from her husband." Vayikra 21:7

Why is it that a Kohen may not marry a divorced woman and a Kohen Gadol may not marry a widow? Let us understand the role of God and Bnei Yisrael with respect to these questions can be answered. HaRav Aryeh Kaplan explains that the relationship between husband and wife, although it does not seem to be related to the subject of the holidays at all. The portion which discusses the festivals seems to begin here, with the introduction of the Shabbos. Yet, when the Gemara (Bava Basra 121a) mentions the words "Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them: 'God's appointed festivals which you shall designate as callings of holiness - these are My appointed festivals.'" Vayikra 23:2 discusses the rule that the eligibility for an animal to be brought as an offering begins from the animal's eighth day. In fact, it is noteworthy that the reading of the Torah from Parshas Emor on the festivals does in fact begin with this earlier paragraph, although it does not seem to be related to the subject of the holidays at all.

Sefer Beis Aharon explains that the holiness with which the holidays are imbued is derived from the general condition of holiness which is imparted upon the Jewish nation. It is only when the Jewish court makes its decision and declares the new month to begin that the dates for the holidays are then determined. God granted the Jewish nation this power of holiness, and through it they consecrate the festivals. The blessing which we recite at Kiddush and in the Amidah for the festivals declares, "God granted the Jewish nation this power of holiness, and through it they consecrate the festivals." Parshas Emor 23:2, God bestows holiness upon Yisrael, His chosen nation, and they in turn consecrate the calendar and the holidays.

The concluding verse in the paragraph of the holidays (Vayikra 22:32): “And I will be sanctified among the children of Israel.” This, then, is the phrase which most appropriately introduces the entire section of the holidays and the calendar. It is only in recognition of God’s holiness and our desire to emulate Him that we then have a system of designating time to be holy, and in our celebrating the various festivals throughout the year.
DID THEY CELEBRATE SUKKOS?

The verse from Nechemiah seems quite surprising, because it implies that the Jewish people did not fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah during the entire period of the first Beis HaMikdash. How are we to understand this?

Birkas Peretz cites the Gemara (Arachin 32b) which tells us that although during the days of David and Shlomo the people did, in fact, build sukkos, and the mitzvah was fulfilled, yet this situation was not consistent. As the years passed, there were times when the mitzvah of sukkah was performed, while most years it was not. That is why the verse in Nechemiah tells us that it had not been conducted on a national basis in its complete form since the days of Yehoshua.

The Gemara (Sukkah 25a) rules that a person who is traveling on a mission to fulfill a mitzvah is exempt from the mitzvah of sukkah. Such a person is not only released from the obligation to sit in a sukkah while he travels, but he is also not required to build one or seek one out at night as he lodges if it will interfere with his journey in pursuit of the particular mitzvah. In fact, the Gemara tells us that even the one who cursed and thereby violated the mitzvah of sukkah was released from the obligation to dwell in sukkos, and the mitzvah was performed for him. The Gemara further explains that the reason the mitzvah was performed for him was because he was traveling on a mission to fulfill a mitzvah (studying Torah), and we are exempt.

During the years when the Jewish people made their pilgrimage to Yerushalayim to celebrate the festivals, they were all in the category of being “messengers in pursuit of a mitzvah”, and they were all released from the obligation to dwell in sukkos. This is why they did not fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah all those years. Originally, when the entire nation resided together at the time of Yehoshua, no one had to travel in order to celebrate the national holiday of Sukkos, and they each lived in a sukkah. After that period, the nation was somewhat dispersed, and in order to come together, many had to travel, thus exempting them from fulfilling the mitzvah of residing in a sukkah. Once again, in the time of Ezra, most of the people lived in Yerushalayim.

Even those who came from outside Yerushalayim participated willingly, although technically they claimed an exemption due to their having traveled.

The verse stresses that “the entire congregation made sukkos”, something that had not occurred since the days of Yehoshua. In the interim, the pilgrims to Yerushalayim had been mostly exempt from the mitzvah of sukkah due to their being רכש הקרא - those on a mission to do the mitzvah of travel to Yerushalayim.

WITH UTMOST SENSITIVITY

“They placed him”, the one who cursed, by himself...not together with the one who gathered wood on Shabbos, for both of the incidents occurred at the same time. - Rashi

Let us analyze this situation. The punishment for the one who gathered wood and thereby violated the Shabbos was well-known to be the death penalty. However, the Jews did not know what the punishment of the one who cursed would be. If they had placed the one who cursed in the same cell with the one who chopped wood, the one who cursed would have immediately assumed that the reason that they were placed together was that he, too, was deserving of capital punishment. If it would have come out that he was not deserving of such a severe punishment, however, it would have meant that we had subjected him to undue distress and anxiety for no reason. This would have been an impropriety on our part, and for this reason he was put in a cell by himself to save him from that possibly unnecessary emotional harm.

Sifsei Chachamim points out that this detail of this episode demonstrates the utmost sensitivity and humane concern which the Torah’s legal system has for all members of society, even those who are criminals. Even in determining the chamber in which the one who blasphemed should be held for those few moments while his sentence was pending, the Torah commanded that we be careful in order not to cause him any undeserved psychological torment or distress. He was to receive the punishment which he deserved, and he was not to be pained with any other penalty.
The law of pronouncing the name of God to curse it appears here due to an actual episode which occurred. It is noteworthy that there are a handful of laws which appear in the Torah at their various locations, each being presented as a response to an actual case which took place. The question arose as to how to deal with the circumstances at hand, and after it was clarified, the Torah states the halacha for all generations. These are: 1) פַּעַם - the Shabbos desecration of the one who chopped wood (BeMidbar 15); 2) הַנְּזָא - the blasphemer of God’s name (Vayikra 24); 3) זְלֵפָה - Tzaphchad and the inheritance of his portion for his daughters (BeMidbar 27); 4) פָּשִׁית - the offering of Pesach Sheni (BeMidbar 9); 5) גַּבֵּי - the debacle of Zimri taking the gentle princess Kozbi (BeMidbar 25).

These five episodes were taught to us in response to actual cases that happened, and due to the prophet (i.e. Moshe) providing the law in each case, rather than being instructed to us directly as were the other laws in the Torah.

Halachic Corner

Questions for Thought and Study

1. Which words indicate that there is an exception for a Kohen, that he has to allow himself to become עַלּוֹן (impure) for a dead body (a dead body that no one else can bury)?

   See Ba’al HaTurim 21:1

2. Why are the Kohanim commanded in Pasuk 21:5 not to make a bald spot because of bereavement (תְּפִילָה)? Why not just say one time that the commandment is for everyone?

   See Kli Yakar 21:5

3. Why is the section concerning Kohanim being ritually pure (תְּפִילָה) written right after the section regarding Kohanim with blemishes?

   See Ibn Ezra 22:2

4. How does the Trop (musical reading of the Torah) indicate that we only count Sefira for 49 days and not 50?

   See Rabbeinu Bachya 23:16

5. What did the הַנְּזָא (blasphemer) argue about that caused him to do this terrible sin of cursing the name of God?

   See Ramban 24:10

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- By Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Binyamin Olstein on the upcoming marriage of their son Yair to Penina Feuer; and to Yeshiva Women President Tami Schultz and her husband Michael on the birth of a grandson, born to Rabbi Shmuel & Sophie Oren.

- Mark your calendars, Blitstein Institute of Hebrew Theological College Commencement Event will take place Sunday, June 16th, at 10:00 AM, at Wilmette Park District, 3000 Glenview Road. Mazal tov to all our upcoming graduates!
• Hebrew Theological College’s Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro will take place this Thursday, May 23, 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Shmuel L. Schuman will speak on “Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and Lag B’Omer”. Complimentary appetizers as well as a discounted menu available for shirur participants. Men and women invited to attend. For more info: Rabbi Joshua Zisook at 847-982-2500 or zisook@htc.edu.

• Dr. Chani Tessler will be speaking at The Samuel T. and Sarah W. Cohen High Tea and Torah Lecture Series: “Torah Giants and Their Writings”, Tuesday, May 28, at 1:30 PM, at Shallots Bistro, 7016 Carpenter Road, Skokie. This stimulating and thought-provoking lecture is open to women of the community. Tea and Treats will be served. Come before the lecture & receive 10% off your lunch order.

• Applications for The Israel Experience Program are still available. This immersion program is ideal for students going to Seminary or Yeshiva in multiple ways. 1) Students receive 30 recognized HTC credits upon successful completion of classes. 2) Students are nurtured & advised by HTC & Blitstein leadership throughout the year. 3) Eligible students can receive federal & state grants & loans for their year in Israel by going through an accredited U.S. program. Info: Rabbi Zisook 847-982-2500 or Mrs. Mamn 773-973-0241.

• Summer Semester at Blitstein Institute begins June 24th. Students can gain a semester’s worth of credits in the abbreviated summer term. Join us for 6 weeks of learning; growth and advancement toward your higher degree. For more information, call Dr. Chani Tessler at 847-973-0241.

• Kayitz Michigan Adventure is still open for current 7th-11th grades. Lake activities: tubing, sailing, canoeing, water skiing, kayaking, inflatable volleyball, inflatable obstacle course, SUP, high dive & more. On land: zip-line, high ropes course, climbing wall, human foosball, target sports. Trips: sand dune jeepin, Michigan’s Adventure theme park, river rafting. Lake Michigan beach nightly campfires & BBQ.

• Application and camp info: yhk.htc.edu.


• Park Plaza Senior Living Community enriches the quality of life for our residents through daily shiurim, live music, exercise classes, lectures, outings and much more. Park Plaza also has beautifully furnished apartments for rent: daily, weekly and long term or for your simcha. For more information, visit our website at www.park-plaza.org or contact Adina at 773-465-6700 or at adina@park-plaza.org.

• TAG Chicago is here to help! Offering filtering solutions for smart phones, tablets and computers. We offer free, no-charge assistance to keep your devices safe. Visit tagchicago.org, call 847-920-8245 or email Help@TAGChicago.org to book your appointment. 8150 Central Park, Skokie. Remember - “Call before you buy!” We will help guide you.

• Summer is right around the corner! Do you have your plans yet? Come join the Maayan Midwest family and our individualized programming, brand new air-conditioned bunk houses, experienced staff, six-lane pool, 1400 feet of lakefront, beautiful lodge, star performers, and state of the art recording studio for a summer of nonstop fun, growth, and friendship. For more info call 847-440-4940 or check out our website at maayanmidwest.com.

• CJE SeniorLife is pleased to introduce our new Care Management Program that maximizes available resources and coordinates care for older adults in our community. Our experienced and compassionate Care Managers provide a free holistic assessment to evaluate your needs, then develop & implement a custom Care Plan. Your share of Home Care Services would be a low hourly rate. You must be over 60 & meet specific residential, income and asset requirements to qualify. Call 773-508-1000 to learn more.

• Congregation KINS Annual Banquet will take place this Sunday, May 19, honoring Lev and Orah Katz, remembering Rabbi Barry Robinson z’t, and thanking Rabbi Dov and Miriam Lerner. For more information: www.congkkins.org or 773-761-4000.

• Congregation KINS is proud to host Mrs. Rachel Besser as Scholar in Residence as part of OU Counting Towards Sinai 2019 Program - this Shabbat, May 18, Parashat Emor. Shior following Main Minyan Kiddush, “Ruth: A Tale of Leadership”; Shabbat Afternoon Women’s Shuir (5:00) - "The State of Israel Then & Now: Models of Redemption”; Women’s Segudah Shlishit (6:15), at home of Yael Shiner, 2734 Jarlath - “Between Pesach and Shavuot: Bnei Yisrael’s Journey from Mitzrayim to Har Sinai”.

• Fake Truth & Virtual Living - A Torah View of Today’s Moral and Social Dilemmas! Join Rabbis Akiva Tatz, Dovid Gottlieb, and Yitzchak Breitowitz at the 18th annual Ohr Somayach Yom Iyun Evening of Learning, this Monday, May 20th, 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Shmuel L. Schuman will speak on “Rabbi Pinchas Zusis: The State of Yeshiva College’s Student Affairs Office”.

• Jewish Theological College’s Anshe Sholom B’nai Israel Congregation invites you to our Sixth Annual Summer Soirée and Benefit on Thursday, May 30, at 7:00 PM, honoring Josh Ehrlich & Sarah Unterman, Karli Salinger, and Seth Greenberg. Visit asbj.org/soiree to learn more and to register.

• Wisdom of Torah Institute will be presenting a lecture by Dr. Esther Shkop, “The Ordinary and Extraordinary – Everyday Heroines of Megillat Ruth”, on Sunday, May 26, at 10:30 AM, in the WiFi Bet Midrash, 8170 McCormick Blvd. in Skokie. Open to the public.
Daughters of Israel invites you to a 60th Anniversary Celebration featuring honored guest Hadassah Goodman and also recognizing our current kallah teachers. Sunday, May 26th, 2019. Doors open 6:30 PM; dinner at 7:00, at Lincolnwood Jewish Congregation, 7117 Crawford Avenue, Lincolnwood, hosted by Midwest Conference Center. Covert.

The Great Jewish Family Festival, Lag B’Omer, Thursday, May 23, 4:00-8:00 PM, at Westfield Old Orchard, Skokie. Celebration for the entire family. Fair with rides for all ages. BMX Bike Show! Plus our signature all-you-can-eat food court. Brought to you by Lubavitch Chabad of Illinois and your local Chabad Center. Discounted all-inclusive entrance wristband at www.JewishFamilyFest.com.

The Skokie community is honored to host Rabbi Mordechai Twerski of Milwaukee/London, this Shabbos, Parashas Einedmor, May 17/18. Early Shabbos (6:25) davening & sponsored family dinner at Skokie Community Kollel (RSVP required). Shacharit 9:45 followed by gala kiddush at Lubavitch Chabad Skokie Green Moch Lounge, 4049 Dempster. Shabbos afternoon class (7:00) followed by Mincha (7:45) & Shalosh Seudos at the Moch Lounge. Accommodations & lunch available. Info & to RSVP: twerskiskihabosinskokie@gmail.com.

The Solomon and Dora Einhorn Glen Mikvah proudly presents “The Marriage Challenge”. Come and take your marriage from Ordinary to Extraordinary in 30 days with Adina Stilerman! This Sunday, May 19, 7:30 PM, at Darchei Noam Glenbrook in Northbrook. For women only. For more details, call 847-278-8389 or email info@glenbrookmikvah.org.

The Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago invites the community to its Evening with the Stars. Join the ATT as it presents student and teacher awards at its Awards Presentation and Annual Meeting, on Tuesday evening, May 21, 2019, at the Ida Crown Jewish Academy, 8233 Central Park Avenue, Skokie. The program will begin at 7:15 PM, followed by a Glittering Star Reception. For more information, call the ATT: 773-973-2828.

Tehillim for Chicago Singles invites you to participate in saying Tehillim for Chicagonol people each Rosh Chodesh & other select days of Kedusha. E-mail TehillimForChicagoSingles@gmail.com to join this local group. Each month an e-mail reminder will be sent to sign up for 5 Perakim of Tehillim, with the goal of completing all of Tehillim. For future email reminders, add your email address to the tab labelled “My email for future Tehillim”. Add/remove names to the first tab when his/her single status changes! Tizku L’Mitvos!

New Shiur Series with Rabbi Kalman Worch continues - The Illinois Center for Jewish Studies and the Sephardic Community Kollel are happy to announce the next class in the new series of monthly classes for men with Rabbi Kalman Worch. The Shiur will take place 7/22 Tuesday, May 21, at Ohel Shalom Torah Center. The topic is “The Rashash (Rav Shalom Shabat)”. Please join us!

Hillel Torah is proud of their Chidon HaTanach Team, who worked so hard and learned a tremendous amount of Torah! 24 students qualified and 15 competed at the nationals in NY. Yasher koach to the four students who placed in the top tier nationally: Daniel Gurevich - 5th place, Rena Neiger - 6th place, Gabriel Klein - 11th place, Ari Klein - 15th place! A special hakarat hatov to our Chidon teacher/coach, Rav Asido, for all his efforts in leading and inspiring our students.

Join us at The Chicago Center’s Banquet, Sunday, June 2, 6:30 PM, at Midwest Conference Center. Three outstanding honorees: Mr. & Mrs. Kaplan, Mr. & Mrs. Ephemrain & Aviva Vilenkis with Kesser Shem Tov Award; and Dr. Edward Kaplan with Refush 311 Award, and a special Memorial Tribute to Mr. Neal Stein, z”l. Go to TheChicagoCenter.org/banquet or email banquet@thechicagocenter.org for ads and reservations. Journal Deadline: Monday, May 27.

Ida Crown Jewish Academy is seeking a full-time teacher of Hebrew language. The desired candidate will have strong language skills and relevant teaching experience. Please direct inquiries to hebrew.teacher.icjca@gmail.com.

All women of the community are invited to NILI’s Shabbat afternoon shiurim. In WRP, in conjunction with KINS, at the home of Yael Shiner, 2734 Jarlath Street, at 6:15 PM, with Mrs. Rachel Besser. In Skokie at the home of Tamar Shames, 9051 Sleeping Bear Road, at 5:30 PM, with Rabbi Ari Zucker. In Lincolnwood at the home of Jessica Weiss, 6549 N. Kimball Avenue, at 5:30, with Rabbi Aaron Kraft.

The new Chicago Orthodox Student Union continues its Learning Program directed by the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel, this Tuesday, May 21, at KINS, 7:45 PM Dinner; 8:00 PM Shiur. CLIK - “College Learning Initiative at KINS” Shiur - “Why We Keep Minhagim”, led by Rabbi Michael Friedman. Meat/veggie food included! Questions? Please email chicagoothodoxstudentunion@gmail.com.

Our popular learn-to-swim program at Bernard Horwich JCC in West Rogers Park is managed by British Swim School, an international leader in water safety and survival skills. British Swim utilizes small group lessons to build on the fundamentals of water safety for infants through adults. Learn more at www.jccchicago.org/swim.

Camp Netzachim Summer Camp for boys completing 1st grade - 6th grade, June 18th – August 9th. We still have some space, so don’t delay!! Join us for another exciting camp season filled with Torah, Sports and Ruach! For more information contact: Selwyn Gordon, 773-383-6834 – text/call campnetzachim@gmail.com.

Come and join the entire community as we bring Meron to Chicago! The Chicago Center invites the community to participate in our annual Lag B’Omer Hadlaka. It will take place Wednesday, May 22nd, 8:45-9:45 PM, 3135 Devon. Don’t miss out on this annual event as the entire community enjoys music, dancing and refreshments in honor of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. For more information, please call 773-761-4005.

Over 400 people attended Hillel Torah’s Premier Screening of our 8th Grade Class production of “Names, Not Numbers”. We thank Laurie Hasen & Laurie Pinchot, and mentors Vivian Bloch, Anita Gelbart & Leah Miller, for working on this amazing film. We also thank all our students in producing this outstanding film who shared their stories with our students: Mrs. Miriam Banker, Mrs. Sheila Gerber, Mr. Abe Rosenblum, Mrs. Judy Straus, Mr. Henry Strauss z”l, & Mrs. Eva Zaret. Visit www.hilleltorah.org for more information.

Hillel Torah thanks Maury & Ora Aaron and Emma’s Bagel Café for generously sponsoring the Dessert Reception following the Premier Screening of our 8th Grade Class production of “Names, Not Numbers, A Movie in the Making”. Everyone enjoyed the delicious buffet of desserts supplied and catered by Emma’s Bagel Café.

Hillel Torah thanks the members of the community for their dedications and contributions to our “Names, Not Numbers” program, in memory of the loved ones lost and in honor of those that survived the Holocaust. Your continued support of this program will ensure that the message of the Holocaust will be remembered forever through our students. For information on dedication opportunities, and to purchase a DVD of this poignant film, visit www.hilleltorah.org or call 847-674-6533.
Likutei Peshitim has Torah content - please treat it respectfully

Answers:
1. When telling Moshe to speak to the Kohanim regarding the commandment not to become נמי, Hashem uses the word “say” twice (“אמרו כי…” and וְיָשָׁם). This is to indicate that the Kohanim were told that it is prohibited to become נמי. They were also told that there is a time that they are required to become נמי - in the case of the תּוֹמֵן תַּנּוּגָה.
2. One might think that since a regular Yisrael does not have such an effect on the community, one cannot do this destructive act. However, for a Kohan, who serves the community, one could do a destructive act. Conversely, one might think that a Kohan, who will be rewarded for his greatness, would not commit a destructive act, but a Yisrael, who may be punished, could perform a destructive act out of sadness.
3. Even though a blemished Kohan could eat holy food (תּוֹמֵן תַּנּוּגָה), he could only do so when he is נמי.
4. The word יָשָׁם ("you shall count") written right before the words "for the 50 days") has a Trop symbol of וּכְתֵּבָה which is a sound that separates it from the next word. Thus the word יָשָׁם is connected to the previous statement of seven weeks (49 days).
5. The phrase יָשָׁם ("you shall count") is to be read with the letter נ (open) as written in the Mishkan, which was mentioned in the previous section.

Prepared by Rabbi Ben-Zion Rand, Editor, and Mrs. Naomi Sambor, Managing Editor
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