



Carnegie Shul Chatter

May 4, 2023



One of the things forbidden to a Kohain in this week's parshah is marriage to a divorcee. A Kohain can marry a widow, but not a woman with a promiscuous past or, as the Chumash that I own translates it, "a harlot." Well, I must admit, I married a divorcee, and no, she does not have a promiscuous past nor was she a harlot.

This is a prohibition that is clearly stated in the Torah and is still followed by Orthodox Jewry, but in Conservative Judaism, the ban was lifted in the 1950s. I'm not exactly sure how the Rabbinic Assembly justified overruling Torah, but it did.

I don't generally republish a previous sidebar, but since this one is particularly meaningful to me, here is a sidebar from the Chatter from two years ago.

This week's Parshah, Emor, begins with the special laws for the Kohanim, one of which is that a kohain cannot marry a divorcee.

Orthodox Jewry still enforces this prohibition, but both Reform and Conservative Jewry no longer ban such marriages. And although Orthodox rabbis will not perform a marriage of a Kohain to a divorcee, they consider such marriages legal if they have been done by a Rabbi.

The Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, in 1952 adopted a responsum authored by Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser permitting Rabbinic Assembly members to solemnize such

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Shabbat Services

Join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19, or attend virtually. Watch your email for a Zoom link or contact Rosalyn Hoffman at rjlynman@yahoo.com. The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found at https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2492749/jewish/Emor-Torah-Reading.htm

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a marriage. This opinion has been widely accepted by the overwhelming majority of the Rabbinic Assembly. However, he went further, recommending that, “where such marriage is to take place, the rabbi seek to persuade the couple to refrain from a large public wedding...”

From the start this recommendation was not widely followed. And in 1996, by a 12-4 vote, the Assembly eliminated the proviso that the Rabbi try to persuade the

couple to refrain from a large public wedding. They also said that such weddings should be permitted because such a wedding was far better than a Kohain marrying outside of the faith, adding to the growing problem of inter-

faith marriages, many of which result in offspring being raised as non-Jews in accordance with the Jewish proviso that children take the religion of the mother.

Although even the Orthodox agree that a Kohain remains a Kohain even if he marries a divorcee, Orthodox shuls and some Conservative shuls do not honor a Kohain who marries a divorcee with the first aliyah, which is traditionally awarded to a Kohain.

Interestingly, the parshah also says, even before it talks about Kohains marrying divorcees, that, “They (Kohanim) shall not make bald patches on their heads, nor shall they shave the edge of their beard, nor shall they make cuts in their flesh.”

And yet I have never seen a shul deny the Kohain aliyah to a Kohain who shaves the edge of their beard. As a Kohain who has married a divorcee, I find the lack of consistency on the part of most shuls and Rabbis to be most perplexing. After all, if shuls are to deny Kohanim who marry divorcees the Kohain aliyah, shouldn't they also deny the first aliyah to a Kohain who shaves the edges of his beard?

Emor in a Nutshell

Leviticus 21:1

From Chabad.org

The Torah section of Emor (“Speak”) begins with the special laws pertaining to the kohanim (“priests”), the kohen gadol (“high priest”), and the Temple service: A kohen may not become ritually impure through contact with a dead body, save on the occasion of the death of a close relative. A kohen may not marry a divorcee, or a woman with a promiscuous past; a kohen gadol can marry only a virgin. A kohen with a physical deformity



cannot serve in the Holy Temple, nor can a deformed animal be brought as an offering.

A newborn calf, lamb or kid must be left with its mother for seven days before being eligible for an offering; one may not slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day.

The second part of Emor lists the annual Callings of Holiness—the festivals of the Jewish calendar: the weekly Shabbat; the bringing of the Passover offering on 14 Nissan; the seven-day Passover festival beginning on 15 Nissan; the bringing of the Omer offering from the first barley harvest on the second day of Passover, and the commencement, on that day, of the 49-day Counting of the Omer, culminating in the festival of Shavuot on the fiftieth day; a “remembrance of shofar blowing” on 1 Tishrei; a solemn fast day on 10 Tishrei; the Sukkot festival—during which we are to dwell in huts for seven days and take the “Four Kinds”—beginning on 15 Tishrei; and the immediately following holiday of the “eighth day” of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret).



Next the Torah discusses the lighting of the menorah in the Temple, and the showbread; (lechem hapanim) placed weekly on the table there.

Emor concludes with the incident of a man executed for blasphemy, and the penalties for murder (death) and for injuring one’s fellow or destroying his property (monetary compensation).

Haftorah in a Nutshell

Ezekiel 44:15-31



This week’s haftorah discusses various laws that pertain to the kohanim, the priests, a topic also discussed at length in the first part of the week’s Torah portion.

Ezekiel prophesies about the service of the kohanim in the third Holy Temple which will be rebuilt after the Final Redemption. The prophet describes their priestly vestments, their personal care, whom they may and may not marry, and their special purity requirements which preclude them from coming in contact with a corpse, unless it’s for a next of kin. He also discusses their calling as teachers and spiritual leaders.

The prophet conveys G-d’s word: “You shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession.” The kohanim do not receive a portion in the Land of Israel, instead they partake of the sacrifices as well as various tithes.

Haftorah Commentary

By Rabbi Reuben Ebrahimoff

The connection of the Haftorah to the Parsha: This week's Parsha discusses the laws of the Kohanim in the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, while the Jews were traveling for 40 years in the Sinai desert. Similarly, the Haftorah discusses the laws and tasks of the Kohanim who will serve in the Third and final Beit Hamikdash, Holy Temple.

The storyline of this week's Haftorah

This week's Haftorah begins with the laws that will apply to the Kohanim in the Third Bait Hamikdash. In the next and final Holy Temple only the Kohanim that are the descendants of the Tzadok family will perform the sacrificial service. Why? Because they were the only Kohanim, Priestly family, that didn't stray from Hashem and his laws. Ezekiel's 1st new rule for the Kohanim: In the future Bait Hamikdash the Kohanim's clothing - their turbans, jackets and pants - will be made from pure linen. After performing the services in the temple, the Kohanim will have to remove the holy ceremonial clothing and change into "street clothes". These are the laws that pertain to the Kohanim.

1. They must not shave their heads or let their hair grow too long. They must wear their hair trimmed. It is said in the Gemarah that the Kohen Gadol would get his hair cut everyday by a very skilled barber that could cut every hair on the Kohen's head the EXACT same length.
2. The Kohanim must not drink wine when they enter the inner court of the Temple. Ezekiel's NEW Rule #2: A Kohen must not marry a divorcee or widow.
3. A Kohen must teach people the difference between holy and sacrilegious.
4. A Kohen must inform people of the difference between something that is spiritually clean and unclean.
5. They will act as Judges to resolve disputes.
6. The Kohanim must keep all the laws of the Torah, especially Shabbat. Ezekiel's New Rule#3: A Kohen must not come close to a dead person, unless it is their mother, father, son, daughter or an unmarried brother, sister or wife
7. The Kohanim will receive gifts in the time of the third Temple. The Kohanim will not have a portion of the Land of Israel set aside for them. Instead they will get gifts in the form of food from the sacrifices given in the Temple.
8. The Kohanim are forbidden to eat from animals that are not kosher.

Yechezkel ben Buzi's Biography:

- ◆ The meaning of his name is "Hashem will strengthen."
- ◆ Was a Kohen, born in the village of Anatot surrounding Jerusalem. His wife died suddenly before his prophecies began.
- ◆ He prophesied just before the destruction of Jerusalem on Tishah Be'av (The 9th of Av). He was exiled in 597 B.C.E. Some of his visions were while he was in exile. He was

a major prophet that recorded the warnings to the Jewish captives of Babylon. He was among 8000 exiles taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon soldiers.

- ◆ He died in Bavel.
- ◆ He saw the divine vision of the Ma'aseh Hamerkavah (Hashem's Throne).
- ◆ He was the only person in the Tanach (Bible) to be called "Ben Adam", Son of Man.
- ◆ Yechezkel wrote his own 48 chapter book; his prophetic ministry lasted 20 years.
- ◆ Was one of three prophets granted the key to resurrection of the dead. (The others were Eliyahu and Elisha)

Famous Phrase:

Ezekiel 42:20, "L'havdil bain hakodesh l'chol" "to distinguish between the holy and the secular" This is the theme of the Havdalah prayer recited on Motzei Shabbat.

Haftorahman's Lesson of the week

In this week's Haftorah, Hashem already reveals the future to us. It is up to us to prepare ourselves. Many times we want something to happen but "it ain't happening yet". Rather than giving up, we should get ready. It means "Be the first one on line" that when things change and they always do, you'll be the first one in the door. Remember the lyrics of this song- "Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah, Get ready, Get ready; Get ready, because here I come.") Prepare yourself spiritually; Hashem has already told you what to get ready for. It makes it much easier to plan for the event.

Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Abraham Hellman

Adolph Roth

David Leon Routman

Ellen Moskovitz Seltz

Berta Shenderovich

Victor Shifrin

Joseph Wilk

Celia Perlman

Eva Grob

Annette Steinberger

Milton I. Watzman

May their memories be for a blessing.