

# Kohanim Advisory

In this week's פרשה, the תורה forbids כהנים from becoming טמא from a מת.<sup>1</sup> This איסור precludes a כהן from going on certain flights.

**Problematic direct flights to Israel:** afternoon and evening<sup>2</sup> EL AL flights from JFK are known to transport a מת the majority of the time.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, כהנים should not travel on these flights.<sup>4</sup>

**Problematic Flights to Israel with a stopover in Europe:**<sup>5</sup> A כהן may not fly on flight LY326 or LY328 from Paris since it is known that the majority of the time these flights transport a מת.

A כהן may not stop over in **Budapest** as flights departing from the Budapest airport generally pass over a nearby Bais Hachayim.

**Recommended flights:** Certain flights don't transport מתים so a כהן may travel on them without inquiring whether there is a מת on the flight.<sup>6</sup> This includes EL AL flights from Newark or Boston. This also includes flights with any airlines that stopover in Emirates, Egypt or Greece and most countries.

**Times for a כהן not to be in the airport:**<sup>7</sup> A כהן should schedule not to be in **terminal 4 of JFK** from 45 minutes before departure of an EL AL (afternoon or evening) flight until the gates are closed.

A כהן should also schedule not to be in **Ben Gurion airport** for about 20 minutes after a flight with a מת lands.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the flights not listed here may have a מיעוט המצוי (a significant minority) so one must ask a שאלה before flying on them.

Updated י"א תמוז תשפ"ד Wednesday, July 17, 2024. Much of this information is subject to change.

*This sign was posted with the encouragement of Rav Moshe Heinemann שליט"א, Rav Agudas Yisroel of Baltimore and Rabbinic supervisor of the Star-K. The information was reviewed by Rav Yosef Fund of the Vaad Hakohanim of Lakewood.<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> ויקרא כ"א: א', ואיסור אהל מפורש בוי"ד סי' שע"א

<sup>2</sup> The morning flight also sometimes has מתים so one must be מברר.

<sup>3</sup> When United Airlines is not flying to Israel, the percentage from ELAL at JFK has increases to statistically 100%

<sup>4</sup> If one was able to determine that there will not be a מת on a particular flight a כהן may go on that flight, however, this cannot be confirmed until shortly before the flight.

<sup>5</sup> מתים are not transported on flights that have a stopover. However, there may be a מת sent directly from the country in which one is stopping over or a problem with the airport at the stopover country.

<sup>6</sup> One does not need to investigate for the possibility of a מת being on the flight. Nonetheless, if a Kohain discovers that there is a מת on the flight he will need to make alternate arrangements.

<sup>7</sup> Currently, ELAL puts the coffin on the airplane before it is attached to the airport for passengers to board. After arriving, the coffin is removed from the airplane while it is attached to the airport for passengers to disembark. Since the Torah teaches that Tumah spreads within a building (ע"י וי"ד שעי"ב: א') the Tumah will spread throughout the terminal so a Kohain may not be in the terminal at that time. Depending on the construction of the airport, the Tumah may spread to the entire airport.

<sup>8</sup> There is a flight from Paris that lands at 4:00 am and a flight from JFK that lands at 4:00 pm.

<sup>9</sup> For more information, one can call 732.523.5020 or email [lakewoodkohanim@gmail.org](mailto:lakewoodkohanim@gmail.org). Some information is available on Hakohanim.org.