

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 32

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EMOR

3rd Iyar 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 21, verses 1 - 15

- ✚ Hashem instructs Moshe to teach Aaron's children about the laws of Kohanim.
- ✚ These laws include the prohibition of coming in contact with a corpse unless it's a member of their immediate family, prohibition from shaving and marrying either a divorcee, a zona (harlot) or someone born from a relationship forbidden to a Kohen. All these prohibitions apply because a Kohen is deemed holy in Hashem's eyes.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 21, verse 16 - Chapter 22, verse 16

- ✚ The Laws of the Kohen Gadol are discussed next. Unlike the Kohanim, A Kohen Gadol can only marry a virgin and he is not allowed to become impure for anyone, including being in contact with or showing any signs of mourning towards his deceased parents.
- ✚ Hashem explains to Moshe, that there are certain blemishes which will disqualify a Kohen from performing any duties in the Mishkan. E.g. blindness, lameness, having a broken limb etc. However they are still entitled to eating from the korbonos, which have been sacrificed on the altar.
- ✚ Hashem continues to teach that any Kohen who has become impure is forbidden to offer or eat from a Korban unless they have first purified themselves in a Mikveh.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 22, verses 17 - 33

- ✚ Hashem informs Moshe that on no account should any animal with any type of blemish or has sustained an injury be accepted too be offered up as a Korban.
- ✚ To qualify as a Korban, the animal has to have been reared by its mother for at least seven days. Furthermore no animal can be sacrificed with any of their offspring on the same day.
- ✚ The Korban Toda (thanksgiving sacrifice) must be consumed by the following morning, as it then would become a desecration of Hashem's name and hence must be completely burnt.

R'Vi'i - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 23, verses 1 - 22

- ✚ Hashem teaches the laws relating to Shabbat, stating that six days, work is permitted but on the seventh day you must rest as the day is considered holy.
- ✚ The festivals are mentioned next starting with Pesach in which no leavened food of any kind can be eaten. On the second day of Pesach, fifty days of counting (the Omer) leading up to Shavuot begins in which the first offerings of new grains are to be brought to the Kohen. This Aliya also discusses other Korbonos which we are obligated to bring on these festivals and a reminder that any gleanings after the barley or wheat has been harvested, must be left for the poor to gather up.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 23, verses 23 - 32

- ✚ A Shofar is sounded on the first day of the Tishrei, to mark the commencement of Rosh Hashanah.
- ✚ The tenth day of Tishrei will be a day of atonement. (Yom Kippur), for which everyone is obligated to fast. Anyone who does not afflict their Neshama's (souls) with this will be spiritually cut off from Hashem (Karet) as a punishment.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 23, verses 33 - 44

- ✚ The seven day festival of Succot begins on the fifteenth day of Tishrei. During which we are instructed to dwell in Sukkah's to commemorate the fact that when Hashem took Bnai Yisrael out of Egypt, He provided them with huts to shelter them from the harshness of the desert.
- ✚ We are also commanded to individually own a set of 'Arba Minim' (The four species), Lulav and Esrog.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 24, verses 1 - 23

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe it will be Aaron's duty to make sure there is enough pure olive oil to keep the 'Ner Tamid'. (The perpetual lamp) continually lit.
- ✚ Twelve loaves of bread must be baked every week and arranged before Hashem on Shabbat.
- ✚ The Unfortunate tale of a Blasphemer is then related, followed by the consequences and compensation owed if you either kill or inflict a wound on someone or their animals intentionally or unintentionally.

Haftorah – Yehezkel (Ezekiel) Chapter 44 verses 15 to 31

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Yehezkel the Navi (prophet) reveals Hashem's words to the Kohanim who follow in his path.
- ✚ Yehezkel then repeats the laws pertaining to the Kohanim, so they will know what is expected from them in order to fulfil their obligations accordingly

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ Parshas Emor, talks about the variety of laws a Kohen must adhere too in order to stay pure and holy.
- ✚ The Haftorah re-emphasises this point, so that the Kohanim of today are able to point the rest of us in the right direction if we stray too far off Hashem's path.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

I happened to be conversing with a member of staff where I work, who although is not Jewish, has read up about Judaism in general, our traditions, laws and social values and has now recently given up on her old secular lifestyle and embraced and enhanced herself into her own religious beliefs by becoming more observant in her faith.

"Every Sunday morning," she told me, "I always used to sleep in late get up eat breakfast, read the newspaper, catching up on all the world events. Which I never had time to do during the week because of my busy working schedule. It did not dawn on me until after I read the passage, 'six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a Sabbath of complete rest', By taking time out and reflecting on the previous week's events" I was unwittingly keeping the most essential commandment of your Torah; Keeping Shabbat!, Ever since that small revelation. I have been arising up earlier each Sunday, so I can benefit and get more spiritually out from my own Sabbath day because that is what my G-d wants me to do."

Parsha Emor contains Sixty three of the Torah's six hundred and thirteen mitzvot, many of which direct us on how to sanctify time by observing our Shabbat and festivals properly. Yet, buried within this lavishly detailed sedra is one of the most famous commandments of the Torah—the mitzvah of pe'ah (leaving the corners of our fields for the poor). Why this injunction to feed the impoverished juxtaposed between how to celebrate the Sabbath and festivals?

The placement of this verse offers insight into the true meaning of Judaism. The Hebrew word for holiness is Kedusha, literally sanctifying ourselves by putting aside our daily occupations and designating Shabbat and all the Jewish festivals as days of Kedusha, enabling us to become more 'holy' fulfilling the commandment which Hashem told us to perform in last week's sedra. Just by putting aside the corners of our "field" (giving charity) for those in need due to poverty or estrangement. Inviting them to sit with us around our Seder table on pesach, or ensuring they have wine and challah so they can make Kiddush for example, is like taking our first steps towards fulfilling the vision of this Parsha; engaging with the concept of how to become 'Holy' and taking action to make it a reality.

To really appreciate the true values of the Torah we should always bind together our celebrations of Shabbat, holy days and other joyous occasions by giving tzedoka to help those in need. In the coming year, may our holidays be holy in the fullest sense of the word so we too (just like the lady I was speaking to) can express and rekindle our fire of embracing and enhancing our own Jewish faith in order to become a better person.

