

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 42

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PINCHAS

14th Tammuz 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 25, verse 10 - Chapter 11, verse 4

- ✚ Hashem rewards Pinchas with his covenant of peace, zealously avenging Hashem by killing Zimri (A Prince from the tribe of Shimon) and Kozbi (A Princess of the Midianites).
- ✚ Since Pinchas had atoned for Bnei Yisrael's short comings, Hashem proclaimed that Pinchas and his descendants will be all be classed as Kohanim.
- ✚ As punishment, Hashem commands Moshe to smite and destroy the Midianites at every opportunity.
- ✚ Hashem then asks Moshe and Elazar to take a new census of all the men from 20 years upwards who were left, now the plague had come to an end.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 26, verses 5 – 51

- ✚ The totals are recorded here for each of the twelve tribes, (discounting the Levi'im).
- ✚ The grand total of all the tribes combined is 601,730.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 26, verse 52 - Chapter 27, verse 5

- ✚ 23,000 Levi'im males from one month old and upwards were counted separately.
- ✚ Hashem explains to Moshe how the land of Israel will be divided up accordingly by using the results from the Census. Larger families would receive greater portions than the small families.
- ✚ A special lottery was set up to determine which area of land in Israel will be designated to each tribe.
- ✚ The daughters of Tzelofhad approached and asked Moshe, if they would be eligible to receive their father's inheritance of land as he had died leaving behind no male offspring.
- ✚ Moshe relays their request to Hashem.

R'VI'I - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 27, verses 6 - 22

- ✚ Hashem agrees, allowing Tzelofhad daughters to inherit their father's estate and goes on to instruct Moshe on the laws relating to inheritance.
- ✚ Hashem asks Moshe to climb up to the top of Mount Avarim, enabling him to see the promised land for himself before he dies.
- ✚ Moshe appeals to Hashem to appoint a worthy individual as his successor.
- ✚ Hashem tells him to publically place some of his spiritual greatness on Yehoshua (Joshua) and pronounce him as his replacement to lead Bnai Yisrael.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 28, verses 1 - 15

- ✚ Details of the various Korbonos (sacrifices) offered up twice daily as well as additional korbonos given to honour Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh are discussed here.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 28, verse 16 - Chapter 29, verse 11

- ✚ The korbonos offered and the laws relating to Pesach, Shavu'ous, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are explained.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 29, verse 12 - Chapter 30, verse 1

- ✚ To finish off, the Korbonos given at Succot and Shemini Atzeret are mentioned here.

Haftorah – MELACHIM 1 (FIRST BOOK OF KINGS) Chapter 18, verse 46 to Chapter 19 verse 21

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Elijah the prophet was hiding in a cave on mount Horeb, from the wicked Queen Jezebel who had issued him with a death sentence for his involvement in having all the Baal worshiping priests executed.
- ✚ An angel appeared to him instructing Elijah to vacate the cave and stand on the mountain to welcome Hashem's presence.
- ✚ Hashem instructs Elijah to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael as king of Aram and Jehu as king of Israel, along with Elisha who will be ordained as prophet in Elijah's stead; who together will continue the battle against Baal.
- ✚ Elijah followed the instructions and he immediately found Elisha and recruited him as his aide and eventual successor.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ Pinchas is acknowledged as the first zealot of the Jewish nation in this week's sedra.
- ✚ This quality is existent in the Haftorah as Elijah proclaims "I have indeed been very Zealous for Hashem"

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

After recording the details of the daily Korbonos (sacrifice offerings) and the additional korbonos given on Shabbat, the Torah turns its focus to Rosh Chodesh, the New Moon festival.

Rosh Chodesh has a special and prominent place in Jewish tradition. While most of the nations of the world calculate their calendars based on the sun, the Jews abide primarily by the lunar calendar with a few adjustments to coordinate with the solar calendar in order to keep our festivals in the right time of year. I.e. Pesach in the springtime and Succot in the autumn.

The symbolism of the moon is very important. We as a Jewish nation are often compared to the moon, especially to the moon's tendency to wax and wane. While the light of the moon is dim in comparison to the light of the sun, and though the light of the moon may, at times, appear to be completely lacking, it is the moon that has the capacity for renewal, whereas the light from the sun will eventually burn itself out and cease to exist.

It is this capacity for renewal which we as Jews identify with and is the secret of our endurance and eternity. While other nations often rise to great heights, once they peak they decline and do not rise again and frequently vanish completely. It is this pattern of constant renewal that connects the Jewish people so profoundly to the moon. Throughout history many nations have sought to destroy and obliterate us completely. However just like the moon which seems to disappear entirely, a "new moon" appears, and begins to shine again. We, the Jewish people defy the odds time and time again and sparkle back into existence once more.

Rosh Chodesh is described in the Torah as a holiday of rejoicing and simcha, albeit a festival holiday which has no distinct celebratory rituals, such as blowing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, eating Matzor on Pesach or waving the Lulav on succot. Yet despite this; Hallel is recited, and a special torah reading is read along with a recitation of a supplementary Mussaf to mark this special event.

I personally feel that Rosh Chodesh's modesty should not be mistaken for lack of importance. In a sense, it is a much understated holiday that tiptoes in and departs just as quietly. However, Rosh Chodesh is nevertheless, a fundamental linchpin of our religion, and which I also feel is the reason why the Torah includes and emphasizes the korbonos offered up alongside the other major festivals. It is because without it, and what Rosh Chodesh represents our people would cease to exist.

May Hashem grant us a complete longevity so that we as a Jewish Nation will never wane again. Amen.

