



Snapshot Torah

GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHAH ISSUE 26

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SHEMINI

20th Adar Sheni 5774

Kohen - First Aliya: Chapter 9, verses 1 - 16

- ✚ The Kohanim were inaugurated on the eighth day of the Mishkan's dedication ceremony.
- ✚ To mark the event, Aaron brings two korbonos (sacrifices) with him. One Korban Hatat (Sin offering) and one Korban Olah (burnt offering).

Levi - Second Aliya: Chapter 9, verses 17 -23

Bnai Yisrael also bring korbonos for Aaron to offer up to Hashem on their behalf. This consisted of One Korban Hatat, Two Korban Olah's, Two Korban Shlamim (Peace offerings) and a Mincha (meal offering).

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya: Chapter 9, verse 24 - Chapter 10, verse 11

- ✚ Once all of the korbonos have been offered up, Aaron raises both of his hands towards the people and blesses them.
- ✚ Hashem's Shekinah (presence) appears, sending down a fire from Shamayim (heaven) consuming the korbonos that belongs to him. Bnai Yisrael then begin singing and bowing down in jubilation.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya: Chapter 10, verses 12 - 15

- ✚ Two of Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu, decide to make their own contribution to the inauguration. They each take a pan and burns incense in them, which is totally forbidden.
- ✚ For their disobedience, a second fire streams down from Shamayim and strikes them both dead.
- ✚ Moshe tells a dumbstruck Aaron and his two other sons, Elazar and Itamar not to show any grief or mourn for their kin as they have been anointed with consecrated oil.
- ✚ Hashem institutes a law of any Kohen who enters the Mishkan must refrain from drinking any wine or other alcohol beverages because they must be able to differentiate between the sacred and pure Korbonos with the profane and impure.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya: Chapter 10, verses 16 - 20

- ✚ Moshe witnesses Aaron's two other sons, Elazar and Itamar burning the Korban Hatat (Sin offering) instead of consuming it.
- ✚ When Moshe confronts them, Aaron intercedes and argues with Moshe, that Hashem would not expect them or himself to eat from the day's sacrifices because of their brothers / his other son's tragic deaths
- ✚ Moshe listens to what Aaron has to say and agrees with him.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya: Chapter 11, verses 1 - 32

- ✚ Hashem teaches Moshe and Aaron the laws relating to Kashrus. (Kosher Food).
- ✚ An animal that has both cloven (split) hooves and chews its cud is deemed kosher; whereas an animal like a camel, rabbit etc. which only chew the cud or a pig that does not but has cloven hooves are considered non-kosher.
- ✚ Every type seafood is prohibited apart from fish that has both fins and scales.
- ✚ Apart from the twenty birds listed in the Torah, all the other species are accepted as being kosher to eat.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya: Chapter 11, verses 33 - 47

- ✚ If a carcass of a non-kosher animal has been in contact with either a person, their clothing or utensils, they will be classified as becoming tamei (impure) and must be immersed in a Mikvah to become tahor (pure) once more. However if the vessel is made from earthen ware it can never become pure again and must be broken in order that it won't get used in error.
- ✚ All insects are deemed not kosher to eat. Hashem warns Bnai Yisrael that anyone who does consume them will not only become tamei but will repulse their Neshama (soul) too.
- ✚ Hashem tells Bnai Yisrael, the reason why he led them out of Mitzraim (Egypt) was that he wanted them to become holy just like himself.

Maftir – PARSHAS PARAH, Bamidbar, Chapter 19 Verses 1 - 22

- ✚ The Maftir discusses the necessary steps that have to be followed to remove all the impurities caused by being in contact with a deceased person.
- ✚ This process involved a seven day period during which the Tamei (impure) person underwent a process involving the Kohen sprinkling ashes from a Red Heifer, enabling them to become Tahor (Pure) once more.

Haftorah – PARSHAS PARAH, Yehezkel, Chapter 36 Verse 16 - 38

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Yehezkel, the Navi, reprimands the Jewish people for defying Hashem, rendering them unfit to remain in the land of Israel; Meaning they had to be exiled and dispersed among the nations as a punishment.
- ✚ All the suffering caused whilst in exile would serve as part of their purification process, enabling them to become eligible enough to return back to their rightful home and to serve Hashem as they had before.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ Both the Sedra and the Maftir teach the laws and importance surrounding purity.
- ✚ The same theme is illustrated in the Haftorah, where although we as Jews are and have been experiencing hardships and persecution during our time in Golus (Exile); Hashem will make us pure once more and will ultimately renew His covenant with us and return us back to where we belong. In Eretz Yisrael. (The land of Israel)

WEEKLY DISCUSSION: The Importance of Self-Discipline

What with the laws of Purity, Kashrus, and the prohibition of Kohanim drinking alcohol, there is one middos (character trait) that stands out, throughout this week's Sedra more than any other. 'The trait of remaining in self-control', no matter how auspicious the occasion is or what circumstance, you are happened to be facing. Take Nadav and Avihu for example. Harsh as it seems, they both died tragically because they lacked self-discipline.

When I first read this passage I thought to myself, what was so bad about Nadav and Avihu desiring wholeheartedly to become closer to Hashem? Surely, it must be something we all should be aspiring to; nor for the Torah to come along and tell us No; as it will ultimately get you killed.

Then I read it again and understood it differently. Apart from Matan Torah, up to that point, Bnai Yisrael were witnessing one of the greatest moments in Jewish history. Hashem showing them that the sin of the Golden Calf had been forgiven, His Shekinah (divine presence), descended down, consumed in a column of fire from the heavens onto the Mizbayah (Altar), inaugurating the Mishkan, before coming to rest in the holy of holies.

Overwhelmed by this, Nadav and Avihu violated and ignored one of the Torah's primary laws: No Man can see G-d and survive. It was not enough for them to sit back and watch these miraculous events evolve around them. They wanted to take part in them too. Their Emotions got the better of them and by rushing into the holy of holies, (without being requested specifically to do so by Moshe, Aaron or Hashem), Korban (sacrifice) in hand, anxiously wanting to please and welcome Hashem into his new home. Nadav and Avihu achieved what they desired, but had to give up their lives in the process.

It's so easy to let our feelings run away with us, making us say or do things that are irrational and would most likely later regret. The primary lesson, the Torah is teaching us from the episode of Nadav and Avihu is Yes; It is good to do things spontaneously from the heart and not to be completely devoid of our emotions like Mr Spock from Star Trek; but you must be able to curb and restrain them a bit in order to fulfil Hashem's wishes on a more practical and logical level too.

