

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 30

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EMOR

20th 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' - 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:

In Judaism, our year is full of numerous special days in which we have an opportunity to take some time out of our everyday busy lives and focus on Hashem and his mitzvot (commandments), if you haven't guessed, I'm referring to the Shabbat and festivals mentioned in this week's sedra of Emor.

Included in this list is the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer, counting the days and weeks from the second day of Pesach until Shavuot, which we are presently involved. I would like to look into this in more detail.

On Pesach, Hashem brought us out from slavery to freedom. At first glance, you could assume that this remarkable redemption was the ultimate goal, as Hashem saved us from our enemies while at the same time making His existence known to the world. So, why, all of a sudden, after this great milestone has been reached, do we commence counting towards another event?

If we look at what took place on Shavuot, the culmination of the Sefirat HaOmer, we can find the answer. On Shavuot, Hashem revealed Himself on Har Sinai and gave us 'the Jewish people' His beloved Torah. When we left Egypt we were free in the physical sense, but to survive as a nation, more was required. Only when we stood at Har Sinai and received the Ten Commandments, as well as the rest of the Torah, was Hashem's ultimate goal finally fulfilled. Why? Because without the Torah, we would have had no real direction in life, no guiding light to instruct us what is the right path to take and what is not.

Throughout History, Many different nations have fought and won wars for their nationalism and freedom, and yet once their enemy had been defeated, they were unsure of what direction to take next, with that new found freedom.

Unfortunately for them, a vast majority of these nations ended up creating and living in yet another form dictatorship which in most cases was the reason to fight so valiantly to escape from in the first place. The problem was these nations were lacking the most essential element in life; the chance of learning Hashem's wisdom, just like Bnai Yisrael had at Sinai when we received and understood the truth of our existence. 'The Torah'

This explains why we have Mitzvot to count the days from Pesach until Shavuot. For just as a child at school or a student anxiously anticipates and counts down the days until his last days at school, university etc, so too do we long for and mark down each day until we receive the Torah.

