

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 40

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CHUKAT

10th Tammuz 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 19, verses 1 - 17

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe and Aaron to explain the purification function of a Red Heifer.
- ✚ A free ranged, unblemished red cow is given to Elazar the Kohen for slaughter. Elazar then sprinkles its blood seven times towards the Mishkan (tabernacle) before completely burning the carcass on the Altar.
- ✚ A pure person gathers up the ashes and places them in a designated place for safekeeping. Both he and the one who burned the heifer are now considered Tamei (Impure) and must immerse themselves along with their clothing in a Mikveh and wait until evening to become Tahor (pure) once more.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 19, verse 18 - 23 Chapter 20, verse 6

- ✚ The red heifer's ashes are mixed with water and are sprinkled over anyone who has been in contact with a human corpse in order to become pure again.
- ✚ Miriam passes away in the fortieth year of Bnai Yisrael's sojourn in the Midbar (desert).
- ✚ The water which flowed miraculously to quench Bnai Yisrael's thirst in Miriam's honour dried up and the people confront Moshe, complaining about the lack of water.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 20, verses 7 - 13

- ✚ Hashem instructs Moshe to take his staff, gather Aaron and the people and speak to the rock to resume the flow of water once more.
- ✚ Instead of talking to the rock, Moshe lifts up his staff and strikes it twice. Water pours out of the rock and everyone, including their animals gets enough to drink.
- ✚ For disobeying Hashem command Moshe and Aaron are barred from leading the people into the promised land of Israel.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 20, verses 14 - 21

- ✚ Moshe sends out messengers to the king of Edom asking permission to pass through his land.
- ✚ The King went out to meet Moshe armed with a large contingent of soldiers, refusing entry.
- ✚ Left with no choice, Bnai Yisrael circumvent Edom and approach the land of Canaan from the east.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 20, verse 22 - Chapter 21, verse 9

- ✚ Upon arriving at Mount Hor. Hashem orders Moshe, Aaron and Aaron's son Elazar to go ascend the mountain.
- ✚ Aaron removes his priestly garments and dresses Elazar in them, making him the new Kohen Gadol.
- ✚ Aaron dies and the whole of Bnai Yisrael mourn him for thirty days.
- ✚ Amalek disguised as Canaanites launch an attack on Bnai Yisrael, so they prayed to Hashem and were victorious.
- ✚ Bnai Yisrael become frustrated and start complaining about the Mann they are eating. Hashem sent venomous snakes to bite the people, the nation cries out admitting their sins. Moshe fashions a copper serpent wrapped around a pole and whoever looked at it were cured. However many died.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 21, verses 10 – 20 and

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 21, verse 21 - Chapter 22, verse 1

- ✚ Bnai Israel continue their journey towards the eastern bank of the river Jordan. Moshe sends messengers to the king of the Amorites, Sihon, requesting permission to cross his land; but Sihon sends his troops to attack Bnai Yisrael instead and is defeated.
- ✚ Og, king of Bashan along with his army also attack and are destroyed as well.

Maftir – Bamidbar, Chapter 28 Verses 9 – 15

- ✚ The Korbonos (Sacrifices) which are required to be offered up to Hashem on Rosh Chodesh during the times when the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash stood are discussed here.

Haftorah – Yishayah (Isaiah), Chapter 66, Verses 1 – 25

- ✚ Yishayah describes the ultimate downfall of all our enemies during the war of Gog and Magog. The Navi forewarns that insincere expressions of devotion are synonymous to those who offer up blemished korbonos (sacrifices) to Hashem for because of this lack of sincerity and devotion, will be ultimately punished for it.
- ✚ Nevertheless, Yishayah's message, those who truly mourn for the absence of the Bais Hamikdash will merit and rejoice in its future redemption and reconstruction and will once again be able to witness the Rosh Chodesh offering and service, and fully participate in expressing their devotion and commitment to Hashem.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA:

- ✚ There are two instances in the Torah when water came out of a rock. The difference is that in the 1st time the act was performed the Hebrew term used was מִן הַסֵּלַע min ha-seila (From the rock). Whereas when the same phrase appeared the 2nd time, the letter Hey is added as a prefix, changing the Hebrew to: מִן הַסֵּלַע הַמֵּן ha-min ha-seila (From the rock)
- ✚ In the Torah, the only other time the word “min” מן comes with a prefix “hey” is in Bereshit 3:11: הֲעֵץ-הַמֵּן ” have you eaten from the tree...?” A question asked by Hashem after the primordial sin of consuming the forbidden fruit.
- ✚ Astonishingly, both of these phrases have the same gematria of 165; meaning that the water from the rock was actually the antidote to the sin of eating from the tree. Therefore, it's logical to assume that had Moshe spoken to the rock instead of striking it. All would have been forgiven and the Moshiach would have come there and then to escort them personally into the Promised Land of eternal peace.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Enthralled by the life changes events over the past few weeks; occurring right in front of us since the UK referendum vote. It's been amazing to see how quickly our political leaders have fallen; losing the power they once had because of one mistake or a twist of fate. This week's sedra runs in a similar vein. As we not only lose one of our greatest influential Jewish figures but two and to make matters worse we also read about the demise and fate of a third, all because of one defining incident. Of course I'm referring to the deaths of Miriam and Aaron and the looming end of Moshe's reign as the greatest leader who ever lived. After the events of the Meraglim (spies) and Korach's rebellion; you could have easily thought things were returning back on track. So, what went wrong?

Even though Hashem decreed that because of their consistent grumbling and lack of faith; Not one of the first generation of Bnai Yisrael who had been freed from captivity and left Mitzraim, would be allowed to enter the Promised Land. You would have thought, surely with all the merits under her belt and the important role she played in Moshe's early life ensuring his survival. Miriam would also have been excluded along with Yehoshua ben nun and Caleb from this terrible fate but this wasn't the case. Why?

To get a better understanding why; you first have to delve into Hashem's reasoning of why both Aaron and Moshe forfeited their chance to not only lead the Jewish nation into the land of Israel but to enter it at all. Hashem said 'Because you did not trust in me enough to honour me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.' (Bamidbar chapter 20, verse 12) The act of striking the rock instead of speaking to it, in Hashem's eyes, especially from a man of stature like Moshe; was an act of defiance and would not be tolerated nor overlooked and needed to be punished accordingly. Despite living the vast majority of his life in devoted servitude towards Hashem's calling and providence. It still wasn't enough to save him.

In a similar vein, this happened to Miriam too. It just took one misjudgement call on her part to undo everything good she had done previously. Miriam had taken it upon herself to criticise Moshe for first marrying a Cushite woman and then neglecting his marital duties towards her. What Miriam did not realise at the time was that this criticism was aimed at Hashem too because in effect she was questioning his motives of choosing Moshe to be Bnai Yisrael's leader. In his anger, Hashem inflicted Miriam with Tzara'at (leprosy) as a punishment. Even though Moshe interceded and prayed on his sister's behalf to be healed. Once again the damage had already been done and just like her two brothers, she was now also refused entry into the Promised Land. Both Miriam and Moshe had an opportunity to show the people of Israel what it meant to live in love as a servant of Hashem without complaint, and, for most of their lives, they did; but unfortunately they both ended up in failure. We, too, have opportunities to show the grumblers and complainers around us what it is to be a servant of Hashem wholeheartedly. With Hashem's help and guidance, Let us draw them closer to him through our love and servitude and not be drawn away from Him ourselves.

