



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 32

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EMOR

13th Iyar 5776

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 korbanos, 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 Korbanos 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

GEMATRIA LINKED TO SEDRA:

- ✚ There are various actions and foods that are traditionally associated with Shabbat. The Vilna Gaon explains that the Gematria, for all things associated with Shabbos will always have a digital root of seven. Five examples of this idea are:
- ✚ NER (Shabbos candles) (spelled Nun, Reish) $50+200=250$, and $2+5+0=7$
- ✚ YAYIN (wine for Kiddush) (spelled Yud, Yud, Nun) $10+10+50=70$, and $7+0=7$
- ✚ CHALLAH (loaves of bread) (spelled Chet, Lamed, Hei) $8+30+5=43$, and $4+3=7$
- ✚ DAG (fish) (spelled Daled, Gimmel) $4+3=7$
- ✚ BASAR (meat) (spelled Bet, Shin, Reish) $2+300+200=502$, and $5+0+2=7$

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

This week's Parsha, Emor (Translated as Speak) ends with a tragic story relating to the spoken word: It is about a man who ends up cursing Hashem in despair. Unsure how to deal with the blasphemer, Moshe places him into custody and wait for Hashem to announce an appropriate punishment; which was that he should be taken out of the camp and stoned by the entire community.

This story bears a remarkable similarity to another episode which appears later in the Torah, in the book of Bamidbar, when a man is found gathering sticks on Shabbat. There, the offender is also held in custody while the community awaited Hashem's decree and the same punishment was meted out – he is to be taken out of the camp and stoned.

There's a striking difference between these two incidents, other than the crime itself. In the latter narration, the stick gatherer is identified only as "a man." Whereas in today's Parsha, the Torah includes two several very specific details about the identity of the offender. He was a son of an Israelite woman, who was the son of an Egyptian man. Since the Torah is generally so sparse with details, the Rabbis understand there must be an underlying reason why these pieces of information were incorporated in the text. I'd like to look at these details and consider what the Torah might be teaching us by their inclusion.

What two distinguishing facts do we know about this blasphemer? Firstly! We know that he has mixed ancestry, and secondly we are told the name of his mother, Shlomit bat Divri from the tribe of Dan. According to Jewish law, even though the man was considered Jewish, he wasn't part of the Jewish People because a person's tribe is derived from their father. This meant because the man's father happened to be an Egyptian, the sad truth was that he didn't belonged to any tribe, nor would he in the future have any claim to any land he would be able to call his own.

It's not hard to imagine how hurt this man must have felt, after assuming that the tribe of Dan would accept him into their fold because of his mother. Only to be told in no specific terms he has no future amongst them or any of the other eleven tribes and must fend for himself. Worse still, after arguing with the tribal representative and is taken to Moshe who ends up ruling against him. Storms out angrily and blasphemes Hashem for the injustice he's just gone through and is condemned to death for the crime.

Even though he had to be killed due to the sin of 'Blaspheme', the people were forced to be present because they had to confront the fact that were partially responsible for the poor lad' death because they had a duty to offer him some way to feel like a brother among Klal Yisrael and not considered as an outcast. The truth is the torah is teaching us a very powerful and valuable lesson. We must be careful not to belittle anyone and push them out of our society because they don't fit in, as this will undoubtedly cause them to sink to even greater depths of despair they are facing. No matter who is crying out for help, we must all answer and try our utmost to save them and welcome them with open arms into our fold.

