

**Parsha Sh'mini in a Nutshell**

*(Leviticus 9:1–11:47)*

On the eighth day, following the seven days of their inauguration, Aaron and his sons begin to officiate as kohanim (priests); a fire issues forth from G-d to consume the offerings on the altar, and the divine presence comes to dwell in the Sanctuary.

Aaron's two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu, offer a "strange fire before G-d, which He commanded them not" and die before G-d. Aaron is silent in face of his tragedy. Moses and Aaron subsequently disagree as to a point of law regarding the offerings, but Moses concedes to Aaron that Aaron is in the right.

G-d commands the kosher laws, identifying the animal species permissible and forbidden for consumption. Land animals may be eaten only if they have split hooves and also chew their cud; fish must have fins and scales; a list of non-kosher birds is given, and a list of kosher insects (four types of locusts).

*(continued next column)*



Our love for G-d must involve two phases: **ratzu**, a powerful yearning for connection with Him, and **shuv**, a commitment to return and express G-d's will by making this world a dwelling for Him. Aaron's sons had reached an all-encompassing longing to cleave to G-d. This should have been followed by a turn toward expressing this bond in their lives.

**Anshei Lubavitch Congregation**

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

*Adult education:*

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

*Youth Outreach:*

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

**Shabbos Schedule**

**Erev Shabbos – Apr 9 / Nissan 27**

Candle Lighting.....7:12 pm

Mincha .....7:15 pm

**Shabbos Day – Apr 10 / Nissan 28**

Shacharis.....9:30 am\*

Torah Reading .....10:30 am

Rabbi Drasha .....11:05 am

Mincha .....7:10 pm

Rabbi's Drasha.....7:35 pm

Shabbos Ends .....8:13 pm

*\*Latest morning Shema is now 9:39 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

**Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):**

***Minyan***

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) .....6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) .....9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs) .....1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs) .....9:15 pm

***Bulletin***

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Also in Shemini are some of the laws of ritual purity, including the purifying power of the mikvah (a pool of water meeting specified qualifications) and the wellspring. Thus the people of Israel are enjoined to "differentiate between the impure and the pure." ❖

**תהילים**

*Tehillim - Psalms*

**Join us this Shabbos morning  
April 10 at 8:00 AM for  
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.**

**This week's Tehillim reading is  
dedicated to  
a refuah sh'laima  
for  
Elimelech ben Leah.**

**Join us each weekday  
morning Mon-Fri as we  
delve into the mysteries  
of Chassidic concepts.  
5:55 am  
followed immediately  
by Shacharis.**

**Thank You to:  
The Baal Korei,  
and the  
Security Volunteers**

**Halachic Zmanim**

**Shabbos, April 10, 2021**

**Daylight Savings Time**

Earliest Tallis ..... 5:26 AM  
Latest Morning Shema .... 9:39 AM  
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) ..1:32 PM  
Plag Hamincha .....6:13 PM  
Earliest Evening Shema ....8:00 PM

# Chassidic Masters

## Powerful Insights From the Rebbe

*Compiled by Mordechai Rubin*

### 1. Body and Soul

In the 11th chapter of Leviticus, the Torah discusses some of the laws of ritual impurity, food that comes in contact with a source of impurity is rendered ritually impure.

The above-quoted verse touches on two of the necessary conditions before a foodstuff is susceptible to contamination: 1) The food in question must be fit for human consumption. 2) It must first come in contact with water or one of the other "seven liquids".

Man is a synthesis of body and soul, the Torah that instructs and inspires one's life likewise possesses both a "physical" element as well as a conceptual-spiritual side. The "body" of Torah is its legal code and pragmatic guide to daily living; its "soul" is the inner dimension of these laws, which addresses the internal world of the human mind and heart, man's relationship with his Creator and his purpose in life.

The is also true of the laws regarding the ritual impurity of food. These, too, have a moral-spiritual application to our lives.

The first law recounted above—that only food that is fit for human consumption is open to contamination—expresses the idea that the loftier a thing, the more vulnerable is it to corruption.

Animal fodder is of a limited potential; equally limited are its negative uses. But the food that drives the human mind and heart can be the instrument of tremendous achievement; conversely, it may fuel the most destructive endeavors.

The same applies to all areas of life. A person may choose to "play it safe" and avoid anything touched by controversy, risk, or the possibility of failure—anything that may challenge his spiritual purity. But in doing so, he also disavows his most lofty potentials, the vulnerable but invaluable "human food" resources of his life. ❖

### 2. Transcend Nature

The Torah emphasizes that the dedication of the Sanctuary took place on the eighth day. Why the eighth? The reason is that the natural order of the world is structured according to a pattern of seven, as indicated by the seven days of the week. Eight represents the transcendence of nature. Therefore, the Sanctuary where G-d's presence — a revelation of G-dliness far above nature — was manifest was dedicated on the eighth day.

Eight is the sum of seven and one. One signifies G-d's transcendence, but as He exists alone, above this world. Eight reflects how the one permeates the seven. Unlike one, it does not refer to pure transcendence that leaves no place for the natural. Instead, it points to a fusion of the transcendent and the natural, how His transcendence will pervade and permeate the natural order symbolized by seven.

For this reason, our Sages associate the number eight with the realm of Mashiach, stating that the harp to be played in the Temple in that era will have eight strands (rather than the seven-stringed harp played in previous generations), for the new awareness that will dawn in the era of Mashiach will erase the dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. In that time, our spiritual awareness will permeate our physical activities, endowing them with inner depth and meaning. ❖

### 3. A Selfless Love

This week's Torah reading contains the commandment: "Do not drink intoxicating beverages... when you come to the Tent of Meeting," prohibiting priests from bringing sacrificial offerings when inebriated.

The Hebrew word for sacrifice, korban, shares the root kerov, meaning "close." Offering a sacrifice meant coming closer to G-d. At present, our prayers take the place of sacrifices and it is through prayer that we develop intimacy with Him.

A person so preoccupied with his material affairs that he cannot think of the spiritual can be considered as drunk. He may pray, but when he prays he is thinking about his material needs. For whom is he praying — for himself or for G-d? Prayer as connection to G-d — indeed, prayer for any purpose other than serving his own needs is beyond him.

***(Continued next page)***

## Powerful Insights From the Rebbe *(continued)*

We must come close to G-d for His sake, not for our own. On a personal level, we are all familiar with self-serving love, coming close to another person for one's own gratification. Yes, at times, that may also make the other person feel good. But one is taking as much — or more — than giving.

But there is a deeper kind of love, one where we devote ourselves to another person for that person's sake, where we care about them and are willing to sacrifice ourselves on that person's behalf. There is no expectation of

receiving anything in return; we make the commitment out of love, because we feel for that person.

Such a relationship should be paralleled in our Divine service. G-d should be served and we should come close to Him without any ulterior motive — neither material or spiritual. Such a commitment can only be genuinely made when one is level-headed and looking at the world objectively. Only when a person is in control and makes decisions with reserve composure can he truly act for others. ❖

### ***Counting the Omer***

From the second night of Passover until the day before the holiday of Shavuot, the Jewish people engage in an unique mitzvah called Sefirat HaOmer (counting of the Omer). The Torah commands us that during this time each year we count seven complete weeks, for a total of 49 days. At the end of the seven-week period we celebrate Shavuot, which means "weeks."

This is considered a mitzvah, so the count, which takes place each night, is preceded by a blessing. However, we may recite the blessing only if we have not missed a single day's counting. If we have omitted the counting even one night during that stretch (and did not make it up during the daytime without reciting the blessing), we may no longer recite the blessing, but instead must listen as a friend says the blessing and then do the counting.

During the times of the Holy Temple, at the beginning of the Omer count and on the following holiday of Shavuot, special grain offerings were brought. These offerings were waved in different directions, similar to how the lulav is waved during the holiday of Sukkot, to demonstrate G-d Almighty's all-encompassing presence.

Why do we count these days? We learn several reasons. The foremost is that the count demonstrates our thrill for the impending occasion of receiving the Torah, celebrated on Shavuot. Just as a child often counts the days until the end of school or an upcoming family vacation, we count the days to show our excitement at again receiving the Torah (as we do in fact receive the Torah in a renewed sense every year).

We also learn that this period is meant to spiritually prepare and refine ourselves. When the Jewish people were in Egypt nearly 3,400 years ago, they had assimilated many of the immoral ways of the Egyptian people. The Jews had sunk to an unprecedented level of spiritual defilement, and were on the brink of destruction. At the last possible moment, the children of Israel were miraculously redeemed. They underwent a spiritual rebirth and quickly ascended to the holiest collective state they had ever reached. They were so holy, in fact, that they were compared to angels when they stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah.

***(Continued next page)***

## ***Counting the Omer (continued)***

It was during that 49-day period that they underwent such a radical transformation. From the lowest lows to the highest heights in just seven weeks!

The commandments of the Torah are not meant merely as our history, but instead represent an ongoing life lesson for every Jew. We view the Torah as freshly received every day of our lives, and approach it and its commandments with appropriate vigor.

So too must we digest the lesson of the counting of the Omer. It is specifically during this time that we strive to grow and mature in our spiritual state. The Torah does not allow us to become satisfied with our current level of spirituality. Instead it tells us to set high goals for ourselves, and then methodically strive to reach that goal.

The growth that occurs during this time is akin to a marathon. We pace ourselves and seek to improve day by day until we reach the day that we again receive the Torah. In this process, we look deep within ourselves and work on all of our negative attributes. If we are challenged in the realm of acts of kindness, we go out of our way to do more charitable works. If we are lacking in the area of justice, we hold ourselves to the highest possible standards and are exacting and demanding in our personal behavior and habits. And so it goes for all of our traits. ❖

## **Haftorah for Parshas Shemini in a Nutshell**

*II Samuel 6:1-19*

This week's haftorah mentions how Uzzah was struck dead when he disrespectfully touched the Ark of the Covenant; reminiscent of Nadab and Abihu's death described in this week's Torah reading.

The Holy Ark had been in storage in the house of Avinadav for many years, ever since the destruction of the Tabernacle in Shiloh. Recently crowned King David decided to move the Ark to the new capital, Jerusalem. He had the Ark placed on a cart and it was transported amidst singing and dancing. When the procession reached Goren Nachon, the oxen misstepped and Uzzah, Avinadav's son, took hold of the Ark to steady it—whereupon he was instantly killed. David was devastated, and he temporarily placed the Ark in the home of Oved-edom the Edomite, where it remained for three months.

"And it was told to King David saying: 'G-d has blessed the house of Oved-edom, and all that belongs to him, because of the Ark of G-d.' And David went and brought up the ark of G-d from the house of Oved-edom into the City of David with joy." The Ark was brought up to the city of David with great singing and dancing. David then blessed and distributed presents to all the assembled Israelites. ❖

**Good Shabbos to all!**

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

