

Parshas Shemini 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)



Chassidic thought develops this concept, stating that 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.

-- The Rebbe

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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 well-spring. Thus the people of Israel are enjoined to "differentiate between the impure and the pure." ❖

Shabbos Parshas Parah

In preparation for the upcoming festival of Passover, when every Jew had to be in a state of ritual purity, the section of Parah (Numbers 19) is added to the weekly reading this week. Parah relates the laws of the Red Heifer with which a person contaminated by contact with a dead body was purified.

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Halachic Zmanim

Shabbos, Mar 26, 2022

Eastern Daylight Savings Time
Earliest Tallis..... 5:53 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:54 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:34 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 6:01 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 7:43 PM

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 – Mar 25 / II Adar 22

Candle Lighting 6:56 pm
Mincha 7:00 pm

Shabbos Day – Mar 26 / II Adar 23

Shacharis..... 9:30 am*
Torah Reading..... 10:40 am
Kiddush 12:15 pm

Mincha 6:55 pm
Rabbi's Drasha 7:15 pm
Shabbos Ends..... 7:56 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:54 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) ... 6:15 am
Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am
Mincha (Sun-Thurs) 1:45 pm
Maariv (Sun-Thurs) 9:15 pm

תהלים

Tehillim - Psalms

Join us this Shabbos morning
March 26 at 8:00 AM for
Shabbos Mevorchim Tehillim.

This week's Tehillim reading is
dedicated to
a refuah sh'laima
for Shoshana Miriam bas Mindel
and Masha bas Mindel

Chassidic Masters

Why Water?

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

*All food that is eaten, upon which
water comes, can be contaminated
-- Leviticus 11:34*

In the 11th chapter of Leviticus the Torah discusses some of the laws of ritual impurity (tum'ah): food that comes in contact with a source of impurity (such as a corpse, a rodent, an object of idolatry, etc.) is thereby rendered ritually impure and disqualified from use in the Holy Temple and its service.

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"); for example, grain that has been kept dry from the time it was harvested is not subject to tum'ah.

Animal Safety

As man is a synthesis of body and soul, the Torah that instructs and inspires his 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.

This 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, all 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.

Three Characteristics of Water

The second law specifies that food becomes susceptible to contamination only after having come in contact with a liquid. In other words, simply being fit for human consumption is not enough; unless the foodstuff has been wetted, it does not attain the high degree of potential that is indicated by the possibility of impurity.

In the spiritual sense this means that a "dry" life will always remain safely limited in scope and extent. In order to be in a position to truly realize its potential it must assume a "liquid" quality.

What are the specialties of the liquid state?

Three things characterize liquids: a) a liquid is an adhesive; b) a liquid is a conveyer; c) a liquid always seeks the lowest point of a terrain.

With the addition of liquid, powder becomes a paste, clay a pot, flour a loaf. Liquid is thus a unifier, bonding the dry particulars to a cohesive whole.

While food provides nourishment for our bodies, it would be utterly useless without the fluids that carry it to the body's every limb and cell (in the words of the Talmud, "He who eats without drink, his food is poison"). In other words, when transportation and integration is needed, be it in the human body or in a river valley, water is the medium of conveyance.

Finally, the solid is a snob. It clings to its station, descending to levels lower than itself only when forcefully dragged down. The liquid, however, naturally flows downward, seeping through the slightest of openings to transport itself from the highest elevations to the lowest plains.

A Fluid Life

The "dry" individual is egocentric, stagnant and jealous of his position. His life is a series of "localized" deeds---deeds and achievements which have no effect beyond their immediate time and place, and which leave no lasting imprint on their performer.

(Continued next page)

He stands alone, shunning connection and adhesion with his fellows, particularly with those inferior to himself.

On the other hand, the fluid individual is one who knows that "He who eats without drink, his food is poison." A thought learned, a goal achieved, must never remain confined to its specific place and parameters; it must affect his entire person and pervade his every thought and experience

This individual also extends the fluidity of his life to his relations with his fellows.

He unites with them so that their endeavors should fuse to a cohesive whole, understanding that "If I am only for myself, what am I?"

And as water, he "flows from a high place to the lowest of places." He applies his most sublime experiences to the mundane particulars of everyday life; and he relates to every man as his equal, regardless of their moral and spiritual station. ❖

Passover is coming !!

"Passover Preparations"

Who is this chametz guy, and how do I get rid of him?

Chametz means "leavened grain." On Passover, not only do we not eat chametz, we mustn't even own it. If a food or drink contains even a trace of wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt or their derivatives, and wasn't guarded from leavening or fermentation—it's chametz. Which means that any processed food or drink today can be assumed to be chametz unless certified otherwise.

Problem is, our homes are infested with the stuff. That's why we go on a full spring-cleaning search-and-destroy mission during the weeks before Passover. We attack any and all areas where food may enter (don't bother with places where food never comes). We move the furniture, oven and fridge; search beneath the sofa cushions; and wipe chairs, cupboards and bookshelves clean. Then there's the office, the coat pockets and the car.

The major target, of course, is the kitchen. After cleaning it, use foil or paper to line all surfaces that may come in contact with food.

You'll want separate utensils and appliances for Passover use. If this is not possible, some kitchen items can be made kosher for Passover. [Click here for more on this.](#)

The Sellout

Now you're thinking, "What about my Ballantine's 30-Year single malt whiskey and my kid's Cheerio-Man masterpiece?" For these items, there's an alternative: simply ensure that they do not belong to you during Passover.

Take the chametz you want to save—the food, the drinks and the utensils used throughout the year (and not koshered for Passover)—and store them away in a closet or room that you will lock or tape shut. Then, authorize an experienced rabbi to make a legally binding sale according to both Jewish and civil law ([click here to do this online](#)). He will sell all your chametz just before Passover, and buy it back as soon as the holiday is over. The night Passover ends, after the rabbi has purchased back your chametz, you can already break out that single malt for a l'chaim. ❖

From Our Sages – Vayikra

It came to pass on the eighth day (Leviticus 9:1)

That day took ten crowns: It was the first day of creation (i.e., a Sunday), the first for the offerings of the nesî'im (tribal heads), the first for the priesthood, the first for [public] sacrifice, the first for the fall of fire from heaven, the first for the eating of sacred food, the first for the dwelling of the Divine Presence in Israel, the first for the priestly blessing of Israel, the first day on which it was forbidden to sacrifice to G-d anywhere but in the Sanctuary, and the first of months.

-- (Talmud, Shabbat 87b)

That day was as joyous to G-d as the day on which heaven and earth were created.

-- (Talmud, Megillah 10b)

It came to pass on the eighth day (Leviticus 9:1)

The number seven represents the cycle of creation; the number eight represents the “circumference”—that which lies beyond the perimeter of time and space. This is why the Divine Presence came to dwell in the Israelite camp on the eighth day. This is also alluded to in the saying of our sages (Talmud, Erchin 13b) that “the lyre of Moshiach has eight strings.”

-- (Keli Yakar; Shaloh)

It came to pass on the eighth day . . . he said to Aaron (Leviticus 9:1–2)

For seven days G-d persuaded Moses at the burning bush to go on His mission to Egypt, as Moses refused. . . . Said G-d to Moses: “By your life, I shall tie this in your skirts.” When did He repay him? . . . For all the seven days of inauguration Moses ministered in the office of high priest, and he imagined it was his. On the seventh day G-d said to him: “It belongs not to you, but to your brother Aaron . . .”

-- (Midrash Rabbah)

Moses said: “This is the thing which G-d commanded you to do; and the glory of G-d shall appear to you” (Leviticus 9:6)

For the seven days of inauguration, during which Moses set up the Sanctuary, performed the service in it and dismantled it each day, the Divine Presence did not rest in it. The people of Israel were humiliated, and said to Moses: “Moses our teacher! All the toil that we toiled was only that the Divine Presence should dwell amongst us and we should know the sin of the [Golden] Calf was forgiven us!” Said Moses to them: “Aaron my brother is more worthy than I. Through his offerings and his service, the Divine Presence will rest upon you, and you will know that G-d has chosen you.”

-- (Rashi)

Moses heard this, and it was favorable in his eyes (Leviticus 10:20)

Moses was not ashamed to admit his error; he did not say “I did not hear this,” but said, “I heard it and I forgot it.”

-- (Talmud; Rashi)

He issued a proclamation to all the camp, saying: “I made an error in regard to the law, and Aaron my brother came and taught it me.”

-- (Midrash Rabbah) ❖

Haftorah for Parshas Parah in a nutshell

Ezekiel 36:16-36

This week's special haftorah mentions the "purifying waters" that G-d will sprinkle upon us with the coming of Moshiach. This follows the theme of this week's additional Torah reading — the purifying qualities of the "Red Heifer."

The prophet Ezekiel transmits G-d's message: The Israelites have defiled the Holy Land with their idol-worship and immoral ways. As a result, they will be sent into exile. "And they came to the nations where they came, and they profaned My Holy Name, inasmuch as it was said of them, 'These are the people of G-d, and they have come out of His land.'" So G-d will take them out of their exile — but not by virtue of the Israelites' merits: "Not for your sake do I do this, O house of Israel, but for My Holy Name, which you have profaned among the nations."

G-d will bring the Israelites back to the Holy Land and purify them with the waters of the Red Heifer. The people will feel ashamed of their actions, and after they will have undergone the process of purification and repentance, G-d will rebuild the country and bestow upon it prosperity and bounty.

"I will resettle the cities, and the ruins shall be built up. And the desolate land shall be worked, instead of its lying desolate in the sight of all that pass by. And they shall say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden, and the cities that were destroyed and desolate and pulled down have become settled as fortified [cities].'" ❖

PARSHAS PARAH: Insight

**Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring to you a red heifer
(Leviticus 19:2)**

Nine Red Heifers were prepared from the time that the Jewish people were commanded this mitzvah until the Second Temple was destroyed. The first was prepared by Moses, the second by Ezra, and another seven were prepared from Ezra until the Temple's destruction. The tenth Heifer will be prepared by Moshiach, may he speedily be revealed, Amen, may it so be the will of G-d.

-- (Mishneh Torah)

שבת שלום גוט שבת!



Gutt Shabbos to all!