

Shabbos Parshas Emor

תפילות • Tefillos

- *Kabbalas Shabbos, Maariv*
- *Shacharis:* Regular Shabbos
- *Torah Portion:* *Emor*
- *Haftorah:* *Yechezkel 44:15-31*
- אב הרחמים
- *Mussaf:* Regular Shabbos
- *Minchah:* Regular Shabbos
- *Pirkei Avos:* Chapter Three
- צדקתך צדק
- *Maariv:* *Motza'ei Shabbos*

Parshah Points:

- *Kohanim* who serve in the *Beis Hamikdash* and represent the Jewish Nation before G-d are required to maintain and safeguard a higher level of sanctity and purity. There are therefore many *mitzvos* directed specifically to the *Kohanim*, as stated in the beginning of this *parshah*.
 - A *Kohen* is not permitted become *tamei* - ritually impure, by being in proximity with, or under the same roof as, a deceased person. It is for this reason *Kohanim* are not permitted to enter a funeral home and as a general rule, cemeteries, with the following exceptions:
 - A *Kohein Hedyot*, a regular *Kohen*, is permitted to become *tamei* for these seven close relatives: (1) a father (2) a mother (3) a wife (4) a son (5) a daughter (6) a brother (7) an unmarried sister
 - A *Kohen Gadol* – a High Priest, is not permitted to become *tamei* for any relative.
 - An exception for both a *Kohen Gadol* and a *Kohen Hedyot* is a *meis mitzvah* - a deceased person with no one to assume responsibility for his burial. This situation may occur, for instance, if a *Kohen* comes across a deceased person in an isolated area and there is no one else to attend to the burial.
 - The laws pertaining to whom a *Kohen* is permitted to marry and to whom he is not permitted to marry.
 - The mitzvah to display honor and respect to *Kohanim*. It is for this reason a *Kohen* is the first called to the Torah and given preference in leading *Birkas Hamazon*.
 - The laws directed to the *Kohen Gadol* in reference to mourning. A *Kohen Gadol* is not permitted to allow his hair to grow or to rend his garments. He is also not permitted to leave the *Beis Hamikdash* to follow the funeral procession of any of his relatives.
 - The physical blemishes that disqualify a *Kohen* from performing the Service in the *Beis Hamikdash*.
 - The commandment to safeguard the sanctity of Offerings and *Terumah* - the portion of crops given to the *Kohen*, and to prevent them from becoming contaminated by *tumah* - impurity.
 - The prohibition of a non-*Kohen* to eat *Terumah*.
- Important note: Produce from Israel from which is required to have the portions of Terumah and Ma'aser - Tithing – separated before it may be eaten. One must be aware when purchasing fresh produce grown in Israel that these requirements have been filled.*
- The physical blemishes that disqualify animals from being offered as sacrifices.
 - The minimum age of an animal to be brought as an Offering is eight days.
 - The prohibition of slaughtering a female animal and her offspring on the same day.
 - The mitzvah of *Kiddush Hashem* – sanctifying the Name of G-d - through our behavior and interactions with others, and the prohibition of causing a *Chillul Hashem* – the desecration of G-d's Name - through our behavior and

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interactions. This commandment includes the obligation to give up one's life to sanctify the Name of G-d when compelled to commit one of the three cardinal sins, idolatry, adultery, and murder, under pain of death.

- The second part of the *Parshah* primarily refers to Shabbos and the five principal Festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkos. This section is also the reading for the second day of Pesach and the first two days of Sukkos.
- The calendar dates of the five main Festivals.
- The mitzvah of the Omer Offering brought on the second day of Pesach. All of the five grains (barley, rye, oats, wheat, and spelt) which took root prior to the Omer Offering may be eaten after the Omer is brought. Grains that take root after this date may not be eaten until the following year's Omer is brought. The law is applicable when the *Beis Hamikdash* is standing and the Omer offering can be brought. Today, the grains may be eaten at the close of the second day of Pesach.
- The mitzvah of counting *Sefiras Ha'omer* – the Counting of the Omer – for forty-nine days, beginning on the second night of Pesach until the Yom Tov of Shavuot.
- The special Meal Offering that is brought on Shavuot.
- The mitzvah of the *Daled Minim* - the Four Species - which include the *lulav*, the *esrog*, the *haddasim*, and the *aravos*.
- The kindling and placement of the Menorah in the *Beis Hamikdash*.
- The *Lechem Hapanim* - Showbread - that was placed on the *Shulchan* – Table - in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Each Friday, twelve large loaves of specially formed bread were baked. On Shabbos they were placed on the *Shulchan*. The twelve loaves from the previous week were divided among the *Kohanim* serving in the *Beis Hamikdash* at that time. The Gemara relates that miraculously, the bread remained perfectly fresh a full week after it was baked, and that each *Kohen* partaking of it would become fully satiated with only a small piece.
- The Blasphemer: The tragic story of a Jew who committed the grave sin of blasphemy. The Torah makes an allusion to what precipitated this blasphemy by stating *ויצו במחנה*, *they fought in the camp*. The Midrash elaborates on these words and details the strife that resulted in the fighting and its cause, which ultimately led to this contemptible sin.

הפטרה • Haftorah

יחזקאל מ"ד: ט"ו-לא • Yechezkal 44:15-31

In this week's Haftorah, The *Navi Yechezkal* speaks of the laws that will be applicable to the *Kohanim* after the coming of *Mashiach* and the building of the third and final *Beis Hamikdash*. The theme of this portion complements the beginning of the *Parshah* which speaks of laws relevant to the *Kohanim*.

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In this week's *Parshah* we read of the Mitzvah of the *Korban Omer* (23:9,10). Before any grain of the new crop may be eaten, a Meal Offering of barley was brought in the *Beis Hamikdash* on the second day of Pesach. Barley is the first of the grains ready for harvest. In verse 23:17 we read of the *Shtei Halechem* Offering. This Offering is comprised of two loaves of bread made from the wheat of the new crop. The *Omer* and the *Shtei Halechem* Offerings are two of the *Mitzvos* linked to the harvest. The Meshech Chochmah perceives an important lesson from this linkage.

Engaging in physical work such as agriculture can easily obscure the centrality of Hashem in our lives. After all, it is our hands-on, often backbreaking efforts that bear results, is it not? The presence of Hashem in these efforts may be forgotten. Yet we know that everything we have, everything we achieve, is a gift from Above - despite the efforts we expend.

Our natural tendency is to separate the spiritual from the physical and compartmentalize each discretely. We may go as far as disconnecting engagement with the physical completely from the spiritual, failing to see Hashem and certainly failing to consider the physical as a conduit for spiritual growth. It is for this reason Hashem gave us *Mitzvos* relevant at all stages of the harvest – an exemplar of an unambiguous and laborious physical endeavor. These *Mitzvos* include the *Omer* and the *Shtei Halechem* of our *Parshah*, applicable in the beginning stage of harvest; the Mitzvah of *Leket* requiring setting aside gleanings for the needy, applicable mid-harvest; and the Mitzvah of *Pe'ah* requiring setting aside a corner of the field for the needy to harvest themselves, applicable during the final stage of the harvest.

The Meshech Chochmah explains that through the fulfillment of these *Mitzvos* we clearly recognize and acknowledge the presence of Hashem, upon Whom our success is contingent. But more than that, it is through these *Mitzvos* that we retain our focus on what is the overriding goal of our lives – spiritual growth and closeness to Him. Manual labor, even the most strenuous, can and should serve as a vehicle of spiritual growth enabling us to connect to the Almighty through the physical world as well as well as the spiritual.

The Meshech Chochmah teaches us an additional aspect of these *Mitzvos*; their serving as instruments to root within us the characteristics of *chemlah* and *chessed* - compassion and kindness. Precisely at times when we toil and labor for our own benefit, the needs of those less fortunate should be front and center in our minds and hearts. The Meshech Chochmah suggests that the Torah seems to be hinting at this most important lesson.

In the midst of teaching us the laws of the *Chagim* – the festivals, the Torah states the *Mitzvos* of *Leket* and *Pe'ah* (23:22). These two *Mitzvos* have already been taught in last week's *Parshah* (*Kedoshim* 19:9). In this week's *Parshah*, the Torah positions them immediately before the festival of Rosh Hashanah (23:23-25), the season which coincides with the close of the harvest season. The precise placement of their reiteration here is the Torah's lesson to us of the perspective of the Jew to the physical world in which we live.

Everything we do, every endeavor we engage in, should be infused with thoughts of our true purpose in this world. In this way, the mundane, too, is sanctified and through it, our spiritual growth and connection to Hashem are heightened as well.

שבת שלום • Good Shabbos

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