

Kol BeRamah

Daf Hashavua - Parshat Shemini

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A weekly digest of the Parshat Hashavua

28 Nissan, 5781 - April 10, 2021

Parshat: Shmini

Stone p. 588

Haftorah: Samuel II 7/17 Stone p. 1168

Blessing of Rosh Chodesh Iyar

Rosh Chodesh Iyar- Next . Monday and Tuesday

Candle lighting: 7:14

Vasikin (Sunrise): 6:38:04

Latest Shma AM: 9:51

Earliest Mincha: 1:38

Havdalah: 8:12

Havdalah check in: 8:30

General Intro. *Parshat Shmini contains several themes.*

1) *The Inauguration of the Tabernacle on 1 Nisan of the year 2449 AM (corresponding to 1312BCE)*

2) *The death of Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aharon and the unexpected consequences*

3) *The general laws of kosher meat.*

4) *The laws of ritual impurity as applied to the carcasses of animals and of utensils. With regard to the last law, we note that the Torah regulations of "Ritual Impurity" or 'Tum'ah" only apply (with one or two exceptions), to the period of the existence of the Temple. i.e. one who contracted Tum'ah would be prevented from entering the Temple or eating sanctified foods. Today, these rules generally do not apply.*

The Moral of the Story

Although all the Jews stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah, not everyone experienced that earth shattering event to the same degree. Some received a higher "dose" of spirituality than others. It all depended on the preparation that went into the event. The more profound the personal energy expended, the greater the spiritual reward. One cannot just walk into the Tabernacle, or visit the Kotel, or enter a synagogue expecting to be spiritually transformed. Moses and the people invested much energy, and took on a great many observances in order to achieve the welcoming clouds of Glory.

At the same time, neither can one decide on his own, how to achieve spirituality, nor should one invent his own rituals, no matter how pure his motivations. The Oral tradition, or Rabbinical law, must be scrupulously observed in order to accomplish this lofty goal. Nadav and Avihu, decided to bypass Moses, in their unsolicited sacrifice. Perhaps had they humbly asked Moses or Aaron, their gift might have been accepted graciously by the Almighty, but their independence, belied their arrogance, and ultimately led to their demise.

Pirkey Avot

On the first Shabbat after Pesach, we begin to read Pirkey Avot, or the Ethics of the Fathers. Each Shabbat until Shavout we will read one of its six chapters.

This branch of wisdom, is found in the Talmudic order of "Damages" which for the most part deals with what we would call today, "Civil Law" i.e. torts, acquisitions, notes of credit, mortgages, etc. What on earth is Pirkey Avot, doing there? The answer is obvious. Damages is the perfect book to contain Pirkey Avot, because it is precisely in our mundane and quotidian work-a-day world, where we need to uphold the highest standards of morality, and honesty!

The Moral of the Story

People often ask me why is Kosher meat so expensive? The short answer is that there are at least four unique processings which must occur in order to render the meat Kosher.

- 1) The animal (or fowl) must be slaughtered by a rabbinic professional.
- 2) lungs must be checked for adhesions and other imperfections, (a perfectly smooth lung surface is referred to as "Glatt")
- 3) The meat must be "Treibered" or purged of the forbidden fats, and blood vessels
- 4) The meat must be salted in order to expunge intramuscular blood.

Numbers 3 & 4 are referenced in our Parsha. The removal of the prohibited fats, and blood are the most critical stage of the kosher process, because consuming them is punishable by "Karess" or Spiritual death, i.e. spiritually being cut off from the people Israel. Most of the forbidden fats are found in the hind

quarters of the animal, and are sold off as “non-kosher” by all Kosher slaughterhouses in America. Unless the meat is properly porged, we assume that traces of fat will be found anywhere in the meat. There is no way of ascertaining whether fat is of the permissible or prohibited variety, therefore one must be extremely scrupulous of this matter. In the merit of our properly observing the laws of Kosher, may G-d grant us and our families a happy and healthy Summer.