

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 29 Nissan 5778, the 14th day of the Omer, Erev Rosh Chodesh Iyar. We say the special Haftorah of “Machor Chodesh” because tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh. We bench Rosh Chodesh Iyar which will be tomorrow and Monday. The Molad, the re-appearance of the moon, will take place Sunday afternoon at 4:37 p.m. and 5 chalakim (about 17 seconds), Jerusalem time. We do say Av HaRachamim, since this prayer was composed for the martyrs of the Crusade period, most of whom were killed during the period of the Omer.

TORAH DIALOGUE

(p. 443 Hz) (p. 651 S) (p. 404 Hi) (p. 588 AS)
SHEMINI תְּמִינִי Leviticus 9:1

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis (RED), Rabbi Emeritus
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1. To define a Chok, a Divine decree for which the Torah gives no reason, the Rabbis usually cite the example of the law of the Red Heifer. I believe that a better example of a Chok are the laws of Kashrut. The human mind is not able to comprehend these laws. It is clear that there is no physical medical reasoning for keeping kosher. We do not live longer than those who do not keep kosher. Commentators state that the spiritual benefits are the reason for Kashrut laws. The Torah informs us that the kosher regimen will increase the Jewish person’s ability to live a holy life. What a person eats has a critical effect on his spiritual and moral calling. And the Torah is smart for attaching this Mitzvah to a daily routine. The first Mitzvah given to man was also a dietary injunction when Hashem told Adam that he should not eat from the tree of knowledge. We do not know what tree was labeled as non-kosher. That is immaterial. The fruit itself did not possess any intrinsic qualities that would give man knowledge. It was the Mitzvah – the discipline – that would train man in a spiritual life. So, too, do these dietary laws have a purpose – to discipline us in a daily routine. Understand Kashrut laws that would benefit us in a discipline: how to control ourselves. (RED)

2. When the Torah describes a kosher animal, it states that it must have split hooves and chew its cud (have multiple stomachs). It give four examples of animals that possess one sign of Kashrut. The camel chews its cud but does not possess completely split hooves. The pig has split hooves but does not chew its cud. The problem is for us to comprehend the Torah illustration of the rabbit and hyrax as animals who chew their cud. Neither of them do so in the way the Torah describes a kosher animal doing. According to ArtScroll, these animals excrete moist pellets from their stomachs to their mouths, which they chew and eat again, and then excrete dry pellets. Thus they appear to chew their cud, but in reality do not. (It is possible that we do not know adequately the proper definition of these animals that are recorded in the Torah.) The Torah cites only these four animals because they are the only examples in the animal world that possess only one kosher sign. That makes the case worse. Rashi cites the case of the pig as an animal who lies on the ground with its feet thrust forward, displaying its split hooves. Be careful. (RED: in Hebrew pork is chazir, but the word chazir denotes poor character traits. So Israelis call pork: white meat!)

3. Split hooves and chews its cud. The Torah specifies two signs of kashrut in animals. There are two types of sinful people in the world. One demonstrates publicly that he is righteous, but internally he does not believe in what he does. In his heart he does not really believe in God. There are others who publicly sin, but internally earnestly believe in Hashem and wish to be righteous. He fears the outside world and does not conduct himself in a righteous way. So, too, does the Torah signify the two signs of kashrut. One sign is external, that the animal displays his split hooves. The second sign is internal; the animal has multiple stomachs. The sign is internal and is not displayed to the outside world. The real “kosher” human being is required to possess both signs. He must be properly balanced by having equality; internally and externally he is required to demonstrate an honest and completely wholesome individual. (RED)

4. “And this you shall eat ... And the swine ...” (11:4,7). Our Sages say (Shabbat 155) “there is no animal poorer than the dog, and there is none wealthier than the Chazir.” The Pardes Yosef explains homiletically that the Kalba refers to those Mitzvot associated with dogs – Lashon Hara, Rechilus, and other forbidden speech. [The Gemara in Pesachim 118 says that one who utters Lashon Hara deserves to be cast to the dogs.] The Chazir symbolizes the prohibition of eating products which are derived from swine. This being the case, we can understand the meaning of the Talmud: There is no Mitzvah which is as strictly adhered to as the prohibition of eating Chazir – many people who are removed from Yiddishkeit often avoid eating pork and ham. On the other hand, there is no Mitzvah which is as neglected as the prohibition of speaking Lashon Hara. Unfortunately, even people who are generally observant of other Mitzvot, occasionally allow themselves the liberty of speaking Lashon Hara and the like which contain countless prohibitions.

HAFTORAH

(p. 948 Hz) (p. 1189 S) (p. 933 Hi) (p. 1207 AS)
MACHOR CHODESH (Samuel I 20:18-42)

The brotherly love that exists between Jonathan and David is strong and unique. The uniqueness is because Jonathan had good reason to fear and detest David. Were it not for David’s meteoric rise, Jonathan should logically become the next king after Shaul. Jonathan accepts David as Shaul’s eventual successor and desires only to be David’s brother. Because of Shaul’s determination to kill David, Jonathan and David had to part company, and the tears flowed (v. 41) עָרַד דָּוִד הַגִּבּוֹר until David exceeded (i.e. Hertz quotes most of the commentators who felt that David was overwhelmed with tears at the time of separation. Hirsch interprets the statement that David controlled himself first. Jonathan was the one devastated by their separation and his father’s hatred for David.)

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QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT SHEMINI 5778
by Rabbi Edward Davis, Rabbi Emeritus

From the Text

1. Who did Moshe assemble to witness the consecration of Aharon and his sons? (9:1)
2. Where did the fire come from to consume Aharon's sacrifices? (9:24)
3. What was Aharon's response to the death of his sons? (10:3)
4. Who retrieved the bodies of Nadav and Avihu? (10:4)
5. What were the signs for kosher fish? (11:9)

From Rashi

6. Why did Hashem choose a calf for Aharon's offering of consecration? (9:2)
7. Moshe calls upon Aharon to approach the Altar for the ceremony (9:7). Why was Aharon hesitant to approach?
8. After the service, Aharon blessed the people. What did he say? (9:22)
9. Why did Nadav and Avihu die? (10:2)
10. Why were the Kohanim to share the honor of teaching the Kosher laws to the people along with Moshe? (11:2)

From the Rabbis

11. Kohanim were permitted to be impure when dealing with the death of relatives. Why were Aharon's family not allowed to attend to their relatives? (Ramban)
12. Why was the drinking of wine and intoxicating beverages prohibited to a Kohen prior to performing a service? (Netziv)
13. Why are Jewish people commanded to keep kosher, and not non-Jews? (Kli Yakar)

From the Haftorah. Samuel II 6:1-7:17

14. Where was the Tabernacle housed in Yerushalayim?

Relationships

- a) Amram – Yitzhar
- b) Chevron – Uziel
- c) Amram – Yocheved (2 answers)
- d) Aharon – Korach
- e) Aharon – Pinchas

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT SHEMINI 5778

1. The elders of Israel.
2. The fire came from Hashem.
3. Aharon was silent.
4. Mishael and Eltzaphan, Aharon's first cousins. They were Leviyim, not Kohanim.
5. Fins and scales.
6. To symbolize that Aharon had been forgiven for his role in the sin of the Golden Calf.
7. Aharon was ashamed to approach the Altar because of his role in making the Golden Calf. Moshe needed to encourage him.
8. The Priestly Benediction, the Birkat Kohanim.
9. Rabbi Eliezer says because they rendered an halachic decision in the presence of their teacher, Moshe, without consulting him. Rabbi Yishmael says because they drank wine before entering the Sanctuary.
10. This was their reward for accepting without protest the Divine decree against Nadav and Avihu.
11. In honor of the inauguration, all the Kohanim had to remain pure and eligible to perform the service.
12. Drinking an intoxicating beverage to strengthen oneself or to lift one's spirits is common for people to do. A Kohen is to draw upon his own inspiration to serve in the Temple, not on an external beverage.
13. Israel is a nation attached to God and accepted the Torah. As such, Israel must be kept from fools that will interfere with its spiritual progress.
14. In a tent.

Relationships:

- a) Brothers
- b) Brothers
- c) Husband – Wife; Aunt Yocheved
- d) First Cousins
- e) Grandfather Aharon