

קהל בני ישראל
זבארוב זאלאזיץ

K'HAL B'NEI YISRAEL

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Ohr Pinchas Parsha Sheet

In loving memory of Reb Pinchas Mandel, Z.L. H.K.M.

Emor

Commentaries

Have a great and joyous Shabbos!

PARSHA COMMENTARIES

PARSHA EMOR:

- 1) "The Priests." 21:1 Ramban points out that when speaking on the subject of the sacrifices and other virtues that pertain to the Temple proper, the Torah uses the title, "to Aharon and his children," and not the title 'Priests' as opposed to here, where the Torah warns about them not becoming impure through a corpse, and addresses them as the 'Priests'. This is because the Torah is impressing upon them that even when they are not in the Temple they shall heed the laws which make them separate and higher than the common folk, because of their status as the , "Priests and servants of Hashem."
- 2) "Except for such close blood relatives as..." 21:2 Kli Yakar says the reason why a dead body causes impurity is because the physical body becomes impure when the soul leaves it at the time of death. However, there is a paradox: the soul does not become impure but the soul is the **reason** for the impurity. The human soul is much higher than the animal soul and it is for this reason that the human being dies through the act of the Angel of Death as opposed to the animal whose death does not require the act of the Angel. Once the Angel separates the body from the soul, the body, which for itself doesn't contain the virtues and holiness of the soul, becomes impure. Kli Yakar explains further that righteous people and specific individuals who, during their lifetimes, have toiled extremely hard to worship Hashem, merit a very special death referred to as the 'Death of a Kiss' from Hashem—that does not entail the intervention of the Angel of Death. As a result, their bodies do not perpetuate any impurity and it is for this reason that the Sages tell us in the Talmud that the day that Rabeinu HaKadosh (also referred to as 'Rebbi' or 'Rebbe Yehudah Hanasi', the compiler of the Mishna) left this world, even the Priests were able to attend his funeral. So too, Aharon was so great that both he and all his descendants merit the 'Death of a Kiss' from Hashem and therefore the Priests may attend the funeral of their own kind.
- 3) "[However] A husband may not become impure to a wife that died that was prohibited to him." 21:4 See Rashi. Sforno says that the word *baal* (husband) in this verse hints to another connotation; The Priest, being the *baal*, the designated one to lead and teach the People of Israel how to worship Hashem, besides the holiness of the Temple and all its contents being represented by this person, therefore it is below his dignity to honor the dead: being that burial and eulogizing the dead are great honors for the dead, this would minimize Hashem's honor. However, his relatives' honor is like his own honor, which does not minimize Hashem's honor. It is for this reason too that in v.6 & 7 where the Torah prohibits the Priest to go unshaven, etc. and the prohibition of the illicit marriages are mentioned, that the Torah says, "they [the Priests] shall not desecrate the Name of their Hashem..." because even if a Priest will say, "I forgo the Honor of the Priesthood and I would rather marry this woman..." this would be desecrating Hashem's Honor, which he has no right to do.

- 4) "Speak to Aharon...A person from your seed during the future generations which will have in him a blemish..." 21:17 Ohr HaChaim points out that Hashem begins the portion about blemishes with, "A person from your seed," which is not how He begins the other portions given to the Priests in this portion—because Hashem included in His 'sweet language' [holy words of the Ohr HaChaim] a promise and blessing that neither Aharon, nor his immediate children will ever contract these blemishes.
- 5) "Blemish," 21:18 Sforno comments that the prohibition to serve Hashem as a Priest if one has a blemish, is because, "one does not come to the gates of the King clothed with a sack [sign of mourning]," [verse adapted from Esther].
- 6) "I am Hashem [and] I am making them holy." 22:9 Sforno explains this to mean: I made the T'rumah [tithes] holy because the Jews set them aside for me, and therefore the Priests will be punished if they desecrate them.
- 7) "...to all their *nedarim* and to all their *nedavos*..." 22:18 Ramban quotes Rashi who quotes the Talmud [Tr. Chullin 2] that says the difference between a *neder* [literally, 'promise'] sacrifice and a *nedavah* sacrifice [literally 'philanthropy'] is: when a person wants to bring a *neder* he says, "I am taking upon myself," as opposed to a *nedavah* when he immediately points to a specific animal and says, "This one shall be a sacrifice." Ramban says it is common that when a person is going through a crucial time, he makes a *neder* to Hashem and says, "If Hashem will be with me [and help me out of this problem...] then I will bring a sacrifice to Him." However, the *nedavah* is designated immediately as an offering for Hashem, without any conditions and is therefore more pure and without exterior motives.
- 8) "Holidays of Hashem...*Mikraay Kodesh*," 23:2 Ramban translates these words, "and Holidays the Jewish Children are 'called upon to gather together'," in order to sanctify Hashem through praying in public [in the synagogue], saying Hallel [special Holiday 'prayer of praise' from the Psalms], wearing honorable clean clothes, and to make it a day of festive meals, However, Targum Onkelos Hager says the words *Mikraay Kodesh* mean 'holy happenings' which the Ramban explains to mean two levels: a) that the day that 'special holy happenings' occurred are designates as holidays, and, b) the Jews should, in their own lives, celebrate these days through festive foods, etc. so that they should be experienced as holy and different than the ordinary days of the year.
- 9) "There are special times...these are My special times." 23:2 Kli Yakar says the repetition of, "*these are My special times*," is a message from Hashem that though Holidays must be celebrated through special foods and clothes [see #7], still and all, unless ample time is spent studying Torah, it is not considered '*My special times*'. One must study the, "Laws of the specific Holiday on the Holiday itself." Only then are we sufficiently performing the commandment of, "Half for Hashem and half for your personal joy." [Tr. Pesachim].

10) "Special times...Shabbat..." 23: 2-3 Sforno notes that after the Torah enumerated the Laws of Sacrifices which allow the Shechinah [Hashem's Presence] to rest among the Jewish Children, and then the Torah enumerates the Holidays, of which Shabbat is the first in a way that it again allows the Shechinah to rest among us.

11) "Pesach to Hashem." 23:5 Ohr HaChaim says this means that the future Holidays of Pesach [Passover] will be solely for Hashem's sake, not like the original Pesach when they left Egypt which had exterior motives such as a) [Medr. Shmos Rab. 19] Moshe's Pesach Sacrifice smelled, miraculously from the scents of Gan Eden [Paradise] and this enticed the Jews' appetite to want to bring the Sacrifice; and b) the fact that Hashem passed over their homes and allowed them to stay alive. Therefore, future Pesach Holidays, which will have neither of these great revelations, will be truly for His Sake.

12) "And you shall count for you..." 23:15 Ohr HaChaim says, "for you," refers to the fact that because the Jewish Children weren't fit spiritually to receive the Torah immediately when they exited from Egypt, they therefore were required to count seven weeks of purity just as a woman must count seven days. However, a much greater amount [seven *weeks* as opposed to seven *days* by the woman] because of the depth of their impurity due to their stay in Egypt.

13) Ohr HaChaim gives another interpretation: Because the Souls of the Jewish Children are compared to the Tablets [as the Sages tell us] and the Tablets were made of sapphire stone [the counting in Hebrew is 'sphira' which Ohr HaChaim is using as a dual interpretation, a) the count, and b) sapphire].

14) "And you shall bring a new present to Hashem." 23:16 Kli Yakar says that the reason for the new present is because the Talmud tells us, "The Torah should be new to you everyday as if today you received it from Mt. Sinai." Two Holidays are hinted to in the Torah, but the Torah does not say the exact date they occur: a) Shavuot, and b) Rosh Hashanah. Shavuot—because it commemorates the Giving of the Torah, and Hashem wants the Torah to be 'new' everyday. Rosh Hashanah—because the Torah wants one to better himself everyday and not only once a year.

15) "And all work you should not do...because it is a day of atonement." 23:28 Ohr HaChaim explains that the logic is: Just as we find the Talmud [Tr. Sotah 40] says that it is incorrect to say verses from the Torah while the Priests are blessing the Congregation [for, how could it be that a servant would be receiving a blessing from his Master and not listen with utmost attention?], so too, on this Special Day that Hashem busies Himself with forgiving His Children, can it be that one will busy himself with mortal work?

16) "And you shall be happy..." 23:14 Kli Yakar says *only* when the Jewish Children are at *peace* with each other and are gathered as one, only then will they be 'in front of Hashem'. *Good Shabbos!*