



CONGREGATION TORAS CHAIM

An intimate space...Grow at your pace.

April 21-22, 2017 ▪ 26 Nissan, 5777 ▪ Shabbos Shemini
Mincha: 7:00P / Candlelighting: 7:44P ▪ Shabbos Ends 8:53P

KIDDUSH this Shabbos is sponsored by Eliyahu Rich. **SHALOSH SEUDOS** this Shabbos is sponsored by the shul. Please contact Rabbi Yaakov Rich at 972-835-6016 if you are interested in sponsoring kiddush or shalosh seudos in the future.

■ SHABBOS SCHEDULE

Friday Night, April 21st

- » Mincha/Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv – 7:00P
- » Candlelighting – 7:44P

Shabbos Day, April 22nd

- » Shacharis followed by Kiddush–8:30A
- » CTC Kids with Tricia Sutkin–10:15A
- » Chumash Shiur (M&W)–6:35P
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■ WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- » Sunday Shacharis 8:00 AM
- » Weekday Shacharis 6:40 AM
- » Weekday Mincha/Maariv 7:50 PM

■ WHAT'S NU AT CTC

- » **Mazel Tov and with great appreciation to Moshe & Ariella Bush and Eli Goldberg** for donating our two new sifrei Torah. May the berachos written inside be fulfilled in you and your families.
- » **Shavuos Shiurim and Kiddushim:** There are many sponsorship opportunities ahead for the Shavuos holiday. Please inquire with the Rabbi.

■ REFUAH SHELAIMA

MEN

- » Zoosav ben Lipke (Father of Suzanne Luftig)
- » Itai ben Shoshana (Son of Ehoud & Shoshana Wilson)

WOMEN

- » Fanna Leah bas Shulamis (Mother of Wes Sutkin)
- » Leah Esther bas Yenta Leah (Lori Jarmel)
- » Yenta Leah bas Shayna (Mother of Lori Jarmel)

■ FOOLS RUSH IN WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD: RABBI LABEL LAM

The sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire-pan, they put fire in the them and placed them. A fire came forth from before HASHEM an alien fire that He had not commanded them. A fire came forth from before HASHEM and consumed them, and they died before HASHEM. (Vayikra 10:1-2)

You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping creature that creeps, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, that you should become unclean through them. For I am HASHEM your G-d, and you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, because I am holy, and you shall not defile yourselves through any creeping creature that crawls on the ground. For I am HASHEM Who has brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your G-d. Thus, you shall be holy, because I am holy. (Vayikra 11:43-45)

What is the connection between these two giant themes? They seem universes apart and unlikely neighbors to be packed by The Creator into the same Torah portion. Maybe they are close because they are so far away from each other. How so?

When the Megilla of Esther wishes to express how wide spread the kingdom of Achashveirosh was we are told he ruled over 127 provinces from Hodu to Kush. The Talmud presents a dispute about the proximity of Hodu and Kush. One opinion is that they were from one end of the world to the other. The other says they were right next to each other. How does that approach make sense? Which opinion is true?

I heard an explanation that they were juxtaposed and contiguous but if you measure around the world in the other direction they were at the extreme ends of the world one from the other.

Here we have a case of Nadav and Avihu, two holy brothers, sons on Aaron the Kohain, rushing into a realm of holiness, at a time of extreme spiritual elevation, but without with permission. They died on the spot. On the other end of the spectrum we find strict instructions about which animals we are and are not allowed to eat.

From the loftiest levels of holiness to the most physical and animalistic appetite we are expected to navigate and proceed with precise rules. There is no room for extremism in either domain. Every move is carefully calibrated.

You might think extreme zealotry is tolerable and praiseworthy in spiritual matters but in truth the exposed wires are highly and dangerously charged there. You also might think there is an excuse when the blood of passion is rushing through our veins. However, there too we are warned strongly to slow down and proceed with extreme caution.

Maybe for this reason we pray every evening that HASHEM should remove the opposing force from in front of us and in back of us. In front of us is easier to understand but what harm can this negative force afflict from behind us?!

Getting too holy too quickly is as dangerous as yielding to raw animalism. Both are departures from true holiness. In either case life is filled with highly charged electric wires and we must navigate cautiously. Food is unavoidable. Spirituality is inevitable. I would feel comfortable changing a light bulb but not a fixture. I tried once and suddenly all the lights in the house went out. I feel fortunate my beard was not burnt off or worse. Now I defer to an expert, a licensed electrician because fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

■ NO PARTNERSHIP

“And Aharon was silent...” (10:3)

Every silence says something.

When the Torah says that “Aharon was silent” after his two sons were consumed by fire for bringing a korban that was not instructed by G-d, it implies that he had something to say, but restrained himself.

What could Aharon have said in defense of his sons’ flagrant breach of the Torah?

The Midrash Pliah remarks, “What could he (Aharon) have said? ‘And on the eighth day he shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin.’”

How would have bris mila been a defense?

The spiritual masters teach that Man was born uncircumcised to emphasize that just as Man must complete his body, to finish the work of Heaven and circumcise himself, so too must Man partner with G-d and use his own initiative to raise the world to perfection.

Nadav and Aviahu, Aharon’s sons, thought that they should use their own input in the service of G-d, and believed that it was right to bring a human fire on the altar, even though fire descended from Heaven.

And strictly speaking they were correct, as it says: “And the sons of Aharon the priest shall put fire on the altar” (Vayikra 1:7) — even though fire descends from Heaven there is a mitzvah to bring a man-made fire.” (Yoma 21b)

Thus, Aharon could have claimed that just as bris mila is

given for us to partner with Heaven, so too the fire from Heaven needed a human counterpart.

In reality though, the claim does not hold water.

Even though, on a regular basis, there is a mitzvah to bring man-made fire, on this day, the day of the inauguration of the Mishkan, where the descent of Heavenly fire was to indicate the resting of the Divine Presence on the Mishkan, there was no place for man's participation. Therefore, the fire was called "a strange fire", since the resting of the Divine Presence tolerates no partnership.

■ KOSHER FOODS: ABARBANEL ON THE PARSHA

This Parsha describes the basic laws of kashrut. Abarbanel attempts to unravel the mystery of why certain animals, birds and fish are permitted while others are prohibited. He also analyzes the different approaches that the Torah takes towards identifying what is permitted and what is not.

In regard to land-dwelling animals the Torah specifies that they must have a split hoof and be classified as a ruminant — meaning an animal with several stomachs that chews, swallows and regurgitates its food several times at the beginning of the digestive process. Abarbanel emphasizes that these physical characteristics are not the reason that they are permitted. Rather, they are the characteristics that enable us to identify them as permitted animals. These animals are purely vegetarian and lack the teeth and claws that characterize carnivorous species. Abarbanel invokes the concept of "you are what you eat" in that these animals are generally placid and gentle. Carnivores, on the other hand, by necessity have a violent, cruel and cunning nature. Eating such an animal would transfer that very nature to us. Even though this distinction is blurred in regard to the four prohibited species that the Torah identifies as having one of the two characteristics but not the other — i.e. the pig, camel, hare and hyrax — Abarbanel points out that G-d in His infinite wisdom is the ultimate arbiter of what is best to ingest in order to maintain the purity of our souls.

Similarly, kosher birds have two characteristics which parallel those of the land-dwelling animals. Just like kosher animals have a unique foot structure, the claws of kosher birds have a unique structure which allows them to walk on land in order to find food. Parallel to ruminants, these birds have a crop and a gizzard that grinds up their food. Additionally, kosher birds are not predatory. Just as in the case of carnivorous animals, G-d is preventing us from absorbing a violent and cruel nature. However, the Torah does not mention these two characteristics. It only mentions a specific list of non-kosher birds. There are two reasons for this. First of all, there are a large number of kosher species. Secondly, the internal characteristics of crop and gizzard have no external manifestations, unlike land-based animals whose diet, dental and jaw structure is a clear indication of their status as ruminants.

Kosher fish also have two identifying characteristics — fins and scales. Although some other commentators point out that fish lacking fins and scales are prohibited because they are bottom-feeders, living not in clear water but in murky, dirty water, Abarbanel rejects this idea and instead points to fins and scales as being indicative of a purer, less grossly physical creature.

Finally, Abarbanel rejects the idea that the main reason for the various prohibitions is to protect out physical well-being. He

points out that gentiles eat these animals without any detrimental effects whatsoever. Additionally, there are numerous plant species that are exceedingly harmful which the Torah does not mention at all. The only reason for these prohibitions is to enhance our spiritual well-being by limiting our physical desires and curbing our animalistic nature. Prohibited species are never referred to in the Torah as 'dangerous' or 'unhealthy'. Rather, they are referred to as 'impure' or 'abominable'. Both of these terms refer purely to spiritual rather than physical consequences. G-d is concerned about the effect of the foods that we eat on our true essence, our character and our behavior.

■ PARSHA Q&A: SHEMINI

1. What date was "yom hashemini"? 9:1 - First of Nissan.
2. Which of Aharon's korbanot atoned for the Golden Calf? 9:2 - The calf offered as a korban chatat.
3. What korbanot did Aharon offer for the Jewish People? 9:3,4 - A he-goat as a chatat, a calf and a lamb for an olah, an ox and a ram for shelamim, and a mincha.
4. What was unique about the chatat offered during the induction of the Mishkan? 9:11 - It's the only example of a chatat offered on the courtyard mizbe'ach that was burned.
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the birkat kohanim? 9:22 - When he finished offering the korbanot, before descending from the mizbe'ach.
6. Why did Moshe go into the Ohel Mo'ed with Aharon? 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the Shechina to dwell with Israel.
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die? 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe's presence, or because they entered the Mishkan after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons' death. What reward did he receive for this? 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.
9. What prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated? 10:9-11 - He may not give a halachic ruling. Also, a kohen is forbidden to enter the Ohel Mo'ed, approach the mizbe'ach, or perform the avoda.
10. Name the three chatat goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the Mishkan. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of Rosh Chodesh, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav.
11. Which he-goat chatat did Aharon burn completely and why? 10:16 - The Rosh Chodesh chatat: Either because it became tamei, or because the kohanim were forbidden to eat from it while in the state of aninut (mourning).
12. Why did Moshe direct his harsh words at Aharon's sons? 10:16 - Out of respect for Aharon, Moshe directed his anger at his sons and not directly at Aharon.
13. Moshe was upset that Aharon and his sons did not eat the chatat. Why? 10:17 - Because only when the kohanim eat the chatat are the sins of the owners atoned.

Good Shabbos

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■ CLASSES

» Hilchos Niddah for men (Sunday 7-8A)

» Before Shacharis Gemara Yevamos for men (M-Fr, 6-6:40A)

» NQ Daf HaYomi Kesuvos for men (Sunday-Thursday following Maariv)

» Learn to Learn Gemara (Tue & Thur 7:00P)

» Chumash for men & women (Shabbos 60 mins before mincha)

» Raising Children the Torah Way (for women) (Sundays 7:30–8:15 PM with Rebbetzin Susan Rich – Beginning after Pesach)