

Parshas Emor

This week's Parsha is Emor, in which Moshe explains the laws of capital impurity for a Kohen and that these laws must be taught to their children. The parsha continues with the laws relating to what renders a Kohen pure, the types of marriage permissible to them, and the types of animals and their status for use as offerings in sacrifices. Interestingly, the order of the description of purity starts with humans, then moves to animals, unlike in previous Parshas (Shemini), where the laws of Kosher are listed, followed by the laws of purity for humans, which follows the chronology of creation. The difference perhaps is that here, when we are discussing the laws pertaining to a specific delineation amongst humans, that is, the Kohen vs. other status, these laws will come first, followed by animals, because these are specific attributes that apply to humans, and the need to be holy for their specific role, unlike the earlier attributes of holiness that universally apply to all Jews (humans). That is, the laws of not being exposed to a dead body apply to a specific category within Jews. Whereas the laws earlier applied universally to all Jews and differentiated them from everyone else, as the Parsha mentions again here, the law is to be holy (21:6). Although the parsha is discussing the laws of the elite among the Jews, that is not by their intellectual prowess, rather their lineage from the Kohanim, there are rules applied to keeping that specific

lineage intact. Interestingly, and again pointing to the eternity of the Torah's rules, they apply even in our times to determine the status of a child of a Kohen based on the relationship the child is in. For example, the rules are so clear that, in modern medicine, where children can be born through surrogacy, these laws are applicable to modern applications that may not have been explicitly discussed in ancient times. Since the Torah is the backbone and blueprint of the world (*Alpaim Shana Kadmah Torah L'olam*), then it stands to reason that the rules and regulations of the Torah in the pesukim are eternal and found in all parts of the world, even in undiscovered applications. The Parsha ends with the review of the holidays, as a reminder to the rest of us, that we, too, play a role in the offering of sacrifices (by virtue of the requirement to go to Yerushalayim three times a year). The opportunity to celebrate the holidays with all their specific rules is a beacon of light throughout the year, helping us ensure we remain connected to Hashem and that all parts work together. As we know from other places, the holidays are our lifeline throughout the year, ensuring we remain connected outside of Shabbos. In addition to a time of reconnection, the holidays are so full of rules and unique features that they remind us of the nature of the system Hashem created for us to serve Him in. That is, there is no part of our life that is devoid of the ability to connect. All the parts must move together in a Halachik

way for it to be sustained, and the proof is in history itself, that through the rigor and protection, the laws and liturgy remain unchanged since the Torah was given. This can be used as a sign of strength when the world is hating us, and the nature of history is repeating itself, we must know that the outcome will result in “Yetzei B’Rchush Gadol” that we will leave this exile with a huge reward, that is in our lifetime with the coming of Mashiach.

Good Shabbos