

Parshas Shemini

This week's Parsha is Shemini, which begins on the eighth day of the inauguration of the Mishkan. Many other significant events occur, including the deaths of Nadav and Avihu and the acceptance of the Jews' offerings in the Mishkan. The acceptance of the offerings solidified for the Jews that Hashem had forgiven them for the sin of the Eigel. Later in the Parsha, we learn about the laws of Kashrus, which are taught to the Jews. Because there is a holy soul within us, we must nourish it with holy food, in our case, kosher food. One important point to note is that since the laws were given, no species has been found that doesn't readily fall into a kosher or non-kosher category. In other words, among all the split-hoofed, cud-chewing animals, no new animal has been found that would somehow disprove the eternality of the laws of the Torah, specifically the laws of Kosher. Furthermore, the only reason we are allowed to kill an animal to eat is that Hashem allows us to do so, following specific halachic procedures.

There is no better conclusion to the Parsha than the laws of Kashrus, which bring out the relationship between Hashem and us Jews. Specifically, the coronation of Hashem occurs because we, the Jews, continue to crown Him Master of the Universe, and in turn He bestows His blessings on us. This idea

connects the end of the Parsha to the beginning. Rashi says on "Vayehi Bayom Hashemini" (and it was on the 8th day), i.e., the 8th day of inauguration, which was the first day of Nisan, on which the Mishkan was finally erected. It received 10 crowns, as stated in Seder Olam. This 8th day carried special significance. These 10 crowns are also explained in Shabbos 87b as "firsts" that happened on that day. A crown, when bestowed on a king, reflects the first embodied moment when the king now has rulership over his people; before then, there is a flux state in which the power can be initiated, but it is not the same as after the coronation takes place. The Gemara in Shabbos highlights many firsts, including the acceptance of the offerings and the full embodiment of the unification between the upper and lower worlds, as evidenced by a fire that consumed the sacrifices during the inauguration of the Mishkan. When the physical world became bound to the spiritual world, the completeness of creation was revealed, and this occurred only after Matan Torah, and, so to speak, culminated on this day of crowning, as Rashi highlights. But we, who live without a Mishkan and without a seemingly physical manifestation of the unification of the upper and lower worlds, still connect to Hashem, all the time, and specifically with the food we eat, which nourishes our physical bodies and, most importantly, the spiritual part of the body, by following a Halachic diet, i.e., kosher. Therefore, within us, we embody the

unification of the upper and lower worlds,
i.e., a continued crowning, i.e.,
connecting us to the day of firsts.
Therefore, the Parsha, concluding with
the laws of Kashrus, which, as
mentioned, are eternal rules, reminds us
of our continued connection with
Hashem, even if sacrifices and other
Mitzvos are no longer part of our day.

In this way, may we continue to serve
Hashem on the path of Torah, and by
doing so, may we now witness the
revelation of the unification of the upper
and lower worlds on a general level, with
the coming of Mashiach.

Good Shabbos