



EMOR - אמור

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

At the beginning of **Parshas Emor**, Hashem tells Moshe to prohibit the Cohanim from becoming ritually impure to take care of a dead body for anyone other than an immediate relative, as well as prohibiting them from shaving their heads with a razor, cutting their **peyos**, corners, of their hair, and cutting their flesh, as they are holy before Hashem. The Cohanim are also prohibited from marrying a prostitute or divorcée, and the daughter of a Cohen who becomes a prostitute is punished by death. The **Cohen Gadol**, high priest, cannot outwardly mourn by not cutting his hair or ripping his clothes or become ritually impure for any dead body, including relatives. He also cannot leave the **Mikdash**, sanctuary, while on duty and has the additional prohibition of marrying a widow. A Cohen with a physical disability, such as blindness, a broken limb, or scurvy, is exempt from service in the Temple but is allowed to eat offerings that are brought by the people with the other Cohanim. If a Cohen works in the Temple in a state of ritual impurity, he is punished with **kares**, his soul is cut off from the Jewish people. A ritually impure Cohen cannot eat from the **Kodshim**, food donated for the Cohanim, until he becomes ritually pure. A non-Cohen is prohibited from eating Kodshim, as they are reserved for the Cohanim, and the daughter of a Cohen cannot eat from them if she marries a non-Cohen, unless she is divorced or widowed without any children. An individual who accidentally eats Kodshim has to repay the Cohen for the food plus one-fifth of the value, but the Cohanim cannot let someone eat from them. Hashem prohibits the Cohanim from bringing an offering that has a physical defect or blemish, but a sheep or ox with limbs of different sizes can be brought as a donation offering. An animal can only be brought as an offering if it is older than 7 days, and it cannot be brought on the same day as its parent. A thanksgiving offering has to be eaten on the day that it is brought, and Hashem reminds the Jews to observe His commandments and not to profane His name. Hashem repeats the commandment of keeping **Shabbos** and the dates and commandments of the holidays: **Passover**, the counting of the **Omer** offering for seven weeks from Passover to **Shavuos**, **Rosh Hashanah**, **Yom Kippur**, and **Sukkos**. Then, Hashem commands the people to bring olive oil to light the lamps in the **Mishkan** and commands Moshe to bake the 12 loaves of bread that were baked every Shabbos in the **Mishkan**, and eaten by the Cohanim. Then, a man whose father was an Egyptian and mother was Shlomis bas Divri from the tribe of **Dan** gets into a fight with another Jew, and curses in the name of Hashem. He is brought to Moshe and placed in jail until Hashem commands Moshe to stone the man to death, and teaches Moshe that anyone who curses in the name of Hashem will be put to death, as well as someone who murders. Someone who kills another person's animal will pay the value of the animal, and someone who injures another has to monetarily compensate for the damages. Then, the nation kills the man who cursed Hashem with stones.

THINK ABOUT IT:

The Cohanim are commanded to be very careful about issues of ritual purity, so they are always ready to serve Hashem. Think about the events of this past year. How might you relate them to this concept?



THE ONE WHO CURSED HASHEM

The story of the man who cursed Hashem's name is very mysterious. You might be wondering: **Who was this man?** We aren't told his name, but we are told that his father was Egyptian. **Rashi** (1040-1105, France) teaches us this father was the Egyptian whom Moshe killed before he ran away from Egypt, and that he was fighting with another Jew from **Dan** because he wanted to place his tent with their tribe, but he was told that he couldn't because his father was not from Dan. **Ibn Ezra** (1089-1167, Spain) explains that this Jew was a convert, as before the Torah was given, Judaism ran through the father, not the mother. **Da'as Zekeinim** explain that the fight occurred when a Jew told him that Moshe had killed his father with the very powerful name of Hashem, so this man responded by invoking the name of Hashem.

וַיֵּצֵא בֶן אִשָּׁה יִשְׂרָאֵלִית
וְהוּא בֶן אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם בְּתוֹךְ
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנְצוּ בַּמַּחֲנֶה
בֶּן הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִית וְאִישׁ
הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי: (ויקרא כד:')

A man came out among the Jews, whose mother was a Jew and whose father was Egyptian. And a fight broke out in the camp between that half-Israelite and a certain Israelite.

THINK

What do you think of this story? Do you feel sympathetic to the man? Do you think that his punishment was fair? What's so wrong with cursing the name of Hashem?



COUNTING THE OMER

Starting on the second night of **Passover**, we count **seven weeks** of the **Omer**. In the times of the **Mishkan** and the Holy Temple, **Beis Hamikdash**, every day of the **49-day** count had a special offering: an **Omer** (specific measure) of barley. At the end of this process, we celebrate **Shavous**, the day that the Torah was given to the Jews on Mount Sinai. These seven weeks commemorate the time that the Jews traveled from Egypt to receive the Torah. You might be wondering: **if this is a countdown to receiving the Torah, why do we count up?** It would make more sense to count down from 49, but we count up from 1! **Our Rabbis** teach us that in matters of holiness, we are supposed to count **up**, not **down**! This teaches us to visualize ourselves on a positive trajectory, building towards our goals instead of counting down to their completion.

DISCUSS:

If someone misses a day of counting the Omer, they can no longer make the blessing on the daily count. **Why?** What can that teach us about growth?

