



Parshas Emor 2020, the pursuit of greatness

This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated to the memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Edward Ben Shaul. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha contains many laws specifically pertaining to Kohanim. We begin with the law that is applicable till this very day, the commandment that a Kohen must remain Tahor- ritually pure at all times. He is not allowed to come in contact with a human corpse. The only exceptions to this rule are immediate relatives, his wife, father, mother, brother, sister, son, and daughter.

The Torah continues with many laws concerning the sacrifices in the Mishkan. It tells us at what age the animal can be used for a sacrifice or which blemishes can disqualify it from being use as a Korban. The Parsha concludes by teaching us about holidays like Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos, Pesach, and Shavous.

However, a question comes to mind: The Parsha begins with G-d telling Moshe the following, (21:1) *"Tell to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and speak to them, they shall not defile themselves for a human corpse from amongst their people."* As the Torah is usually very clear and concise with its wording, why does it repeat itself by saying, "Tell to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron and speak to them"?

Rashi writes that the Torah repeats itself because G-d wanted Moshe to tell the Kohanim that even their children should adhere to the laws of purity. As the Gemara in Yevamos explains (114:a), since the children of Kohanim are given certain parts of the sacrifices, they should be taught these laws and try to keep themselves pure.

The Abarbanel writes that Kohanim receive their additional level of holiness from birth to be able to eat from the sacrifices. We see that when G-d told Moshe to count the Jewish people, it was only from age twenty and above. Like Pasuk says (1:3), *“You and Aaron shall count them by their groups from the age of twenty years and above, all those who can fight in the Jewish army.”*

As opposed to the Kohanim, who were counted from just one month old, as the Pasuk writes (Bamidbar 3:15) *“Count the tribe of Levi by house and family, and every male from the age of one month old and above.”*

However, the Malbim gives a deeper and more powerful explanation. He explains that when the Pasuk adds, *“And speak to them,”* it refers to the rest of the Jewish nation. We too, can reach an additional level of holiness; however, it takes much dedication and hard work to receive it. Attaining it means we always remain pure in our spiritual and personal lives. As the Pasuk writes, (Shemos 19:5-6) *“Now if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples, for indeed all the earth is Mine. – You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Jewish people.”*

The Malbim continues, although the majority of the Jewish people were not commanded to stay away from a human corpse, we can still focus on remaining pure whenever possible. This means staying away from all sins, which are our impurities. Instead, commit and devote ourselves to creating and nurturing a powerful and meaningful relationship with our creator.

In our daily life, and especially during this unprecedented time, we must know that no matter how much others have a leg up, we can still be successful. Because real success comes from hard work, dedication, and commitment to our goals and dreams.

“It is only dedication and commitment that can transfer dreams into reality.”

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*