

Parsha Themes

PARASHAT SHMINI

Parsha Recap

On the eighth day of the inaugural days of the Mishkan, Moshe gathers the people and gives Aaron and his sons very specific instructions. Two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, don't follow the instructions and they die. Aaron is very upset that this happened, and he was quiet in the face of tragedy. Moshe continues to give highly specific guidance to Aaron and his remaining sons to finish the inauguration of the Mishkan. Our Parsha moves on to teach us about Kosher and non-Kosher animals, outlining the different rules for domesticated animals, fish, birds and bugs.

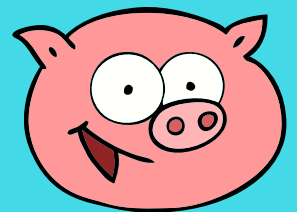


1.) NO ALCOHOL

Kohanim are not allowed to do any Kohen-work when they have consumed alcohol. Why? When people drink alcohol, what happens to them? What kinds of drinks have alcohol in them?

2.) KOSHER ANIMALS

There are some animals, fish and birds that you cannot eat at all. Why can we only eat some animals and not others? Why are there such strict rules?



3.) ANIMAL CARCASSES

Even a Kosher type of animal needs to be slaughtered in a very specific type of way in order to be Kosher. Kosher slaughter is called "shechita." If the animal is a Kosher type, why does the slaughter matter?

PHRASE OF THE WEEK

וַיִּדָּם אַהֲרֹן. Vayidom Aharon, and Aaron was silent. Aaron's silence in the face of tragedy teaches us that we don't always need to know what to say. Sometimes the best thing to say is nothing.