

Beit Rabban Parashah Page

Parashat Shemini

Leviticus 9:1-11:47

Shabbat Parah

פרשת שמיני

ויקרא ט:א-יא:מז

שבת פרה

Parashat Shemini contains one of the saddest stories in the Torah. At the ceremony to consecrate Aharon and his sons, preparing them for their work as priests, two of his sons offer additional fire to HaShem, not exactly the way the ceremony had been commanded. They were killed by a flash of fire from HaShem. There are many upsetting parts of the story, and two of the most difficult are Moshe's response and Aharon's silence (Lev. 10:3).

Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what HaShem meant when HaShem said: 'Through those near to Me I show Myself holy, and gain glory before all the people.'" And Aaron was silent.

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן, הִוא
אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה' לֵאמֹר בְּקָרְבֵּי
אֱקָדָשׁ, וְעַל־פָּנֵי כָּל־הָעָם,
אֲכִידָה; וְיַדְמָם, אַהֲרֹן.

What do you think Moshe means and why do you think he said this to Aharon? Why do you think Aharon is silent? Is his silence in response to Moshe's words or to the loss of his sons, or both?

When there is a death in someone's family, it is traditional to visit them during shiva. Sometimes it is hard to know what to say when a friend has lost someone they loved. What do you do when you don't know what to say? How might it be to just be quiet, and be there with your friend? What are other things that you could do to help a friend who has experienced a loss?

When something in your life makes you very sad, what are some of the things you do or say? Are you comforted by sharing with friends or do you prefer to keep things inside? How can other people help you when you are feeling sad about a loss?