



# Parshas Shmini

For the week ending 24 Nissan 5759  
9-10 April 1999

## Overview

**O**n the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various korbanos (sacrifices) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe bless the nation. Hashem allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the Mishkan and draw closer to Him through their mitzvos there. Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an original offering that was not commanded by Hashem. A fire comes from before Hashem and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the kohanim as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they must not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the Mishkan. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves; and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food. The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species. The Jewish People are commanded to be separate, and holy – like Hashem.

## Insights

### THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB

**“Moshe said to Aharon, ‘Come near the altar...’ ” (9:7)**

**B**ungee-jumping, hang-gliding, free-fall parachuting, and riding over Niagara falls in a beer barrel all share one thing. You have to be absolutely *meshuga* to do them.

There's a big difference between being *fearless* and being *foolhardy*.

However there are times when being afraid is an advantage. The Chafetz Chaim once decided that a particular student should take a vacant post as the Rabbi in a distant community. The student was reluctant to go. He told the Chafetz Chaim he was afraid of the responsibility of being the only halachic authority for a whole community. The Chafetz Chaim replied, *“Should I send someone who's not afraid?”*

Sometimes being afraid doesn't disqualify someone from being the right man or woman for the job. Sometimes it's the essential quality.

Moshe had to tell Aharon, *“Come near the altar.”* Rashi tells us that Aharon was embarrassed and afraid to approach the altar. Moshe told him not to be afraid, for it was precisely Aharon's quality of bashfulness which qualified him to be the *kohen gadol*.

When we want to draw close to G-d, to serve Him with more conviction and faithfulness, we might feel embarrassed by our inadequacies, afraid and incapable of such a task. *“Who am I to serve G-d?”* we might think. It is precisely that quality of self-effacement, of fear, which is the prerequisite for being *“the right man for the job.”*

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## SEVENTH HEAVEN

### “And it was on the eighth day...” (9:1)

**W**hen Moshe set up the *Mishkan* Sanctuary, he didn't set it up just once; he set it up eight times. Every day, for seven days, Moshe set up the *Mishkan* and then took it down again.

On the eighth day, he set it up and left it up.

Why was all this necessary?

Let's answer this question with another one. Why did G-d create the world?

G-d created the world so that the *Shechina* — the Divine Presence — could dwell in it. When G-d first created the world, the Divine Presence rested on the Creation. However, Man, through his destructive spiritual actions, caused the *Shechina* to retreat bit by bit, until it ascended back to the Seventh Heaven. After the world had sunk to this spiritual nadir there came seven spiritual giants in seven generations who managed to bring the Divine Presence down again to this world: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Levi, Kehas, Amram and Moshe.

With the giving of the Torah at Sinai, G-d finally “descended” once again to this world, as it says “And Hashem came down to Mount Sinai.” However, in all too short a time, the *Shechina* retreated back to the Seventh Heaven at the Jewish People's infidelity regarding the Golden Calf.

The healing process of seven generations of *tzaddikim* and the concomitant return of the *Shechina* to this world was concretized in Moshe's building the *Mishkan* for seven days. However, even after these seven days, which represented the seven generations, the cure was not total. A golden calf was still possible. It was only on the eighth day, when Moshe set up the *Mishkan* for the eighth time, that the final cure to these spiritual maladies took effect. And thus, the *Mishkan* could remain standing.

This is one of the reasons that the Talmud says, “On the day the *Mishkan* was finally set up, Hashem had the same joy as on the day on which the Heavens and the Earth were created.” For it was on that day that the purpose of this world, G-d's “dwelling” in this world, was finally achieved.

Sources:

*The Right Man For The Job* - Degel Machane Ephraim, Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

*Seventh Heaven* - Chesed L'Avraham in Iturei Torah, Tractate Megilla 10