

This *parasha* opens with HaShem giving Moshe the laws that are specific to Aaron and the other priests. It is emphasized that the priests were to stay pure and holy. Remember in last week's *parashah*, HaShem commanded, "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy." They were to obey God's commands and they were to offer perfect sacrifices. Among the 63 commandments found in this *parashah*, there are the ones that tell the people about the appointed times that were to be kept as holy convocation, and what to do with a person who is a blasphemer or a murderer.

This *parasha* tells us that to be in HaShem's picture, perfect holiness and obedience were required. The priests had to be perfect physically as well as spiritually. No one could serve as a priest if they were blind, lame, or had a broken hand or foot. Neither could they be a dwarf, a hunchback, have a face that was scarred, nor have an arm or leg that was longer than the other arm or leg. But this is only a partial list. The offerings that the priests presented to HaShem also had to be perfect. An offering was not acceptable if it was blind, had a broken leg, or had skin problems like eczema or ulcers or scabs. Anything offered to HaShem could not be bruised, crushed, torn, nor cut: it had to be without defect.

HaShem told the priests what they needed to know in order to serve Him in the tabernacle. The priests had to be aware of the differences between holy and common, clean and unclean. Just as we are members of His spiritual household and have been called to be a royal priesthood, so we, too, are to be aware of what is required. The *haftarah* reading reiterates what HaShem demanded of the priests - and of us.

The point is; we know that we aren't perfect, but that without the Temple in Jerusalem, we can no longer offer sacrifices to cover our sins. However, we are told *V'ahav'ta et Adonai Eloheicha, b'chol I'vav'cha, uv'chol naf,sh'cha, u'v'chol m'odeha*. We are to draw close to HaShem by loving the Lord our God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, and with all of our resources. And while we may not be perfect, we trust in the One who is. HaShem provided a perfect sacrifice that allows us to draw near and to serve Him. We have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light and obtained mercy from the living God.

Focus: HaShem's Requirements

Hebrew Leviticus - 22:31-32

English - Leviticus 22:31-32

Hafrarah - Ezekiel 44:23-24

B'rit Chadasha - 1 Peter 2:3

