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Parshat Shemini **April 18, 2020 – 24 Nissan 5780**

In this week's parshah there are three major themes. The first is the dedication of The Tabernacle. The second is the deaths of Nadav and Avihu. The third is the dietary law of kashrut. It is the laws of kashrut that I would like to spend some time on.

When I ask people why they keep kosher; often the answer is because of health reasons, or because of tradition. The actual correct answer is "because The Torah says so". However, much has been extrapolated from the laws of kashrut. When one controls what goes in the mouth, one may have better control of what words comes out of the mouth.

The spread of Covid-19 may have something to do with the eating habits in various provinces of China. It has to do with eating animals that we would find repulsive in the Western world. In addition to poor hygiene the results are what we are seeing.

As we look at the laws of kashrut we must stay away from forbidden foods, not just because they contaminate the soul, but also what it can do to the body. Yes, kashrus is a mitzvah without definitive reasons, but think about what it does for us.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

