

## **Chapter 09 – Private Life & Public Institutions \* (24 paragraphs)**

### **Paragraph 01 – Land Law System Effective for Sustenance; More Needed to Keep Life Going Smoothly**

SUMMARY: The land law took care of the people's sustenance, economic and accommodation needs. However, in addition to that, the mind needs mental and intellectual stimulation, and challenges that foster development of character and discourage boredom.

### **Paragraph 02 – Life was Stimulated by Attention to Dietary and Kosher Laws**

SUMMARY: The Law provided regulations that impacted upon all phases of the lives of the people including dietary do's and don't's, and the observation of the laws of Kosher.

### **Paragraph 03 – Laws Designed to Keep the Focus on Israel's Existence as a Divinely Chosen Race**

SUMMARY: These were not laws the non-observance of which would place the people in physical jeopardy of their health. These laws were designed with a specific purpose in mind – i.e., to remind them that they were a special people with a special purpose – they were the people of God, separated out for holiness, to be different, to be dedicated. They were to emulate their father – Yahweh – and to be holy because He is holy. The laws of kosher would keep that idea of purity & holiness before their minds always.

### **Paragraph 04 – Sabbath Law Designed for both Domestic and Public Spiritual Stimulation**

SUMMARY: The Sabbath law comes into the picture with that same focus of purity and dedication. It was not an abstaining, it was a doing – an active focusing of the mind on Divine matters to the honour and glory of Yahweh, a reminder of His place in their lives.

### **Paragraph 05 – Rite of Circumcision Designed to Remind Families of their Covenant With Yahweh**

SUMMARY: Likewise with the rite of circumcision – in itself a benign activity as to having any bearing on their physical well-being or survival as a nation. Hundreds of thousands of uncircumcised Gentile nations surrounded them in obvious health and prosperity. This activity was again designed for the sole purpose of reminding them, at the birth of every male child, of the covenant that constituted them a special and chosen people before God.

### **Paragraph 06 – Childbirth Purification Ritual Designed to Keep Yahweh Before the Minds of the Nation**

SUMMARY: The ceremonial effect that the process of childbirth brought upon the mother also was designed to bring Yahweh into focus as the family engaged upon the ritual of purification as a requirement of holiness and atonement. There will be an entire chapter on this subject later in the book.

### **Paragraph 07 – Dedication of the Firstborn a Reminder of Their Divine Deliverance from Egypt**

SUMMARY: The dedication to Yahweh of the firstborn son in every family was to remind the people that they were where they were and that their very existence was a result of the Divine miracle of the Exodus from Egypt brought about by the death of every firstborn in Egypt that did not have the Passover markings on the doorposts.

**Paragraph 08 – People Touched by the Law Daily & Hourly in Every Aspect of Their Lives**

SUMMARY: These laws of kosher touched every activity that might be engaged upon in the natural course of daily – and even hourly - activity. It involved even what might be deemed to be the most innocent and often even accidental activity. But these incidents involved contracting uncleanness and required immediate attention, leaving the underlying livelihood activity and attending to the purification ritual.

**Paragraph 09 – Purpose of the Ordinances Was to Stimulate the Consciences to the Divine Presence**

SUMMARY: This would constantly and consistently bring the people face to face with the inherent uncleanness of the flesh and their need for constant purification in order to be in the Divine presence signified by the tabernacle.

**Paragraph 10 – Failure of the Ceremonial Laws to Have the Desired Effect was Due to Human Nature**

SUMMARY: Although the uncleannesses and defilements were ceremonial, they were none the less intended to have a real spiritual effect upon the mind. The problem was that, more often than not, these things failed to have that effect and outcome. The failure was not because of the particular race or culture of people involved, but rather on account of the same human nature we all possess in common. None of us are in a position to sit on our pedestal of righteousness and look down upon their failures and think we could have done better.

**Paragraph 11 – “Uncleanesses” Were Ceremonial/Artificial, Not Actual, for Purpose of Recognition Only**

SUMMARY: These kosher laws did not deal with physical uncleannesses and defilements such as could be resolved by a visit to a medical doctor or such like. These were defilements that were ceremonial, or imputed as a legal impurity, designed to convey a spiritual lesson.

**Paragraph 12 – Although Artificial, Defilements were Nonetheless Felt & Experienced Mentally**

SUMMARY: There was an element of effectiveness regardless of a failure to recognize the significances of the ceremonial rituals. This layer of effectiveness resided in the human quest for status among peers. To be regarded by peers as unclean would not be a thing to be desired by status seekers, whether real or artificial. So these laws would have at least a disgruntled, reluctant compliance even from those ruled by the flesh.

**Paragraph 13 – The Concept of Holiness Promoted by Constant Carefulness to Avoid Defilement**

SUMMARY: If the Kosher laws still had that effect with the fleshly element, then how much more so with those who were spiritually conscientious and sensitive to Divine instruction! The particular symbology underlying the items involved in the legal rituals would be there to be contemplated by the mind in tune with spiritual things, and such would get the implied spiritual lesson. More consideration will be given to these things in future chapters and study.

**Paragraph 14 – Public Ceremonial Observances/Feasts Had an Application to Israel as a Holy Nation**

SUMMARY: The material to this point has considered keeping Yahweh before the minds of the people by means of private individual and family purification rituals. This was good to a point, but Israel was more than simply an assortment of individuals / families. Israel was a nation and therefore there needed also to be national stimulus. This need was provided for by means of public institutions such as communal feasts.

### **Paragraph 15 – Feasts Designed to be a National Public Recess from Daily Activity**

SUMMARY: The feasts of Israel were unique as far as national institutions are concerned. Besides the spiritual lessons which will be considered in another chapter, they filled a very real national social need. God created humans to be social creatures, and He has supplied His chosen ones with special wholesome activities to satisfy those needs. This was provided for the nation of Israel by the observance of the three national feasts – Passover, Firstfruits, and Tabernacles / Booths. For us, in our time, this need is provided for by the institution of the ecclesia with its social and spiritual activities.

### **Paragraph 16 – National Assemblies Designed for Public Fellowship & Enjoyment**

SUMMARY: The picture presented is that of “holidays” that are truly “holy-days”. It is wholesome socializing that equally benefits every participant. Imagine an entire nation packing up and venturing out for a two week intermission in their lives! There was even provision to lighten the load of the journey without compromising the spirit of the exercise. That is, provided they did it as directed and expected. We know that, with the passing of time, the flesh got in the way and the feasts, along with almost everything else they did, degenerated into debauchery, even including idol worship. But the design and the blueprint was there so they were without excuse.

### **Paragraph 17 – Special Public National Assembly Dedicated to the Formal Reading Of God’s Law**

SUMMARY: This special assembly is one occasion that in our studies we sometimes pass by without much thought. A national assembly for the particular purpose of the reading of Yahweh’s law to the entire nation, including Gentile associates and proselytes. If done diligently, this would leave every man, woman and child without excuse. No one could say “I didn’t know”; or “No one told me”. This special assembly was once every seven years; but it served as the final stamp on a steady national diet of assimilating God’s law in one form or another.

### **Paragraph 18 – Passover Feast Marked Start of a New Religious Year & a Reminder of Deliverance**

SUMMARY: The Passover Feast focused the minds of the people on the details of their Divine deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. It marked the beginning of their religious year, and reminded them that had it not been for the shedding of blood and having the mark of it on their doorposts, they would not have been passed over and would have perished with the Egyptians. It was to be to the nation as a mental legacy that would be passed down from generation to generation.

### **Paragraph 19 – Feasts of Passover & Firstfruits Designed to Foster United Joy & Gratitude to Yahweh**

SUMMARY: The Passover Feast was also intended to foster in the people an attitude of gratefulness as they contemplated what God had done for them. It puts us in mind of the rejoicing of the saints in the kingdom age as they look back and consider how the grace of God has so affected their lives, and where they would be without it. The feast of Firstfruits provided the opportunity to show that gratefulness, and remind them - and us - of that which must always be the motive for everything we do; the contemplation of Divine condescension in spite of our unworthiness, and the miracle of deliverance.

**Paragraph 20 – The Firstfruits Offerers were Themselves with Their Families to Partake of the Offering**

SUMMARY: The Feast of Firstfruits was a tithing of the production of the land. It was to be tithed to the Levites and to those who were in need but was also to be partaken of by the offerer after he had declared that he had followed the provision of sharing with others.

**Paragraph 21 – Feast of Booths like a National Picnic Away from Home in the Open Air**

SUMMARY: The Feast of Tabernacles or Booths was observed about six months after the Passover at the end of harvest and marked the beginning of the civil year. The people had to erect temporary booths from tree branches that would serve as their shelter for the period of the feast, much like campers would set up tents. It was a warm time of year and the entire occasion was to exude a theme of joyousness and pleasure and fellowship.

**Paragraph 22 – Feast of Booths to Commemorate Wilderness Sojourn After Deliverance From Egypt**

SUMMARY: This feast was instituted to remind the people of the Divine guidance they had received while in their wilderness sojourn on the way to the land of promise. They were to bring plenty of provisions from the harvest to illustrate and remind themselves of the extent of the Divine blessings received.

**Paragraph 23 – The Feasts Provided a National Rescue from the HumDrum of Everyday Life**

SUMMARY: It was by the means of these national institutions that the people were not only kept from lethargy, boredom and depression, but mentally stimulated to the abundance mentality coupled with the constant reminder of their dependence on God for all blessings and the necessity to work together in unity.

**Paragraph 24 – The 144<sup>th</sup> Psalm Expresses the Sentiment Fostered by the Mosaic Institutional Laws**

SUMMARY: The 144<sup>th</sup> Psalm puts that abundance mentality into perspective, with a reminder of the Divine trustworthiness and the exhortation concerning the uselessness and needlessness of complaining.