

Shemini

The sin of Nadav and Avihu, sons of Aaron, was that they took 'strange fire' to the altar of the sanctuary. The precise nature of that offence is not revealed, but it is suggestive of some premeditated rejection of tradition. The road to discrimination, persecution and bloodshed is paved with sectarian departures from traditional faith.

Tazria/Metzorah

The priest, in biblical times, was the medical practitioner. His quintessential sense of awe before the genius of the Creator and his faith in God as the Supreme Healer combined to provide the requisite humility for the careful and dignified exercise of his skills.

Acharei Mot/kedoshim

One of the most heinous crimes mentioned in the Torah is the burning of children as sacrifices to Molech. God 'sets His face' against its perpetrators and against those who fail to expose its practitioners (Lev.20:2-5). The modern-day counterpart are those who brain-wash, train and send out gullible youngsters as suicide bombers.

Emor

No newly-born animal could be removed from its mother, even to be offered as a sacrifice, until seven days had elapsed (Lev.22:27). Let those who dub *Shechitah* as cruel reflect on this example of Judaism's profound sensitivity even to the emotional pain of an animal's frustrated motherhood.

Behar-Bechukotai

In biblical law, all land in Israel reverts to the original owners at the jubilee (Lev. 25:10-18). Neither bankruptcy, theft, invasion or the passage of time could deprive them of their ancestral possession. And hence our historical claim to that land.