

## Lesson 26 – Perek 15:19-23 - Firstborn Animals

### Objective:

Students will examine an example of a contradiction in a law between Debarim and Bemidbar and think about two different ways of resolving it.

### Activity:

1. Read pesukim. *What are the two cases discussed?*

What to do with a healthy first-born animal, and what to do if it gets a blemish.

2. *What is the law in the first case?*

One must not let the animal work the land because it is separated for God. Instead it must be brought to Jerusalem and eaten there as a sacrifice.

3. *What is the law in the second case?*

If the animal has a blemish then it can be eaten like all non-sacrificial meat in any place excluding the blood.

4. *Why does this law appear here?*

This is the last elaboration of chapter 12's law of centralization. Pasuk 20 emphasizes that it can only be eaten in the Bet haMikdash. A blemished animal which may be eaten is just like any other non-sacrificial meat. Pesukim 22-23 of this chapter therefore quote 12:15-16 which legalize eating meat outside the Bet HaMikdash and require one to spill out the blood..

5. Optional. Read Bemidbar 18:17-18. Also look at 18:1 to see that this entire chapter is directed to Aharon and his children the Kohanim.

### במדבר פרק יח

(יז) אֵךְ בְּכוֹר שׁוֹר אוֹ בְּכוֹר כֶּשֶׁב אוֹ בְּכוֹר עֹז לֹא תִפְדֶּה קִדָּשׁ הֵם אֶת דָּמָם תִּזְרֹק עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת חֲלָבָם תִּקְטִיר אֵשָׁה לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה לִידֹנָד:  
(יח) וּבָשָׂרָם יִהְיֶה לָךְ כְּחֹזֶה הַתְּנוּפָה וּכְשׂוֹק הַזִּמְיִן לָךְ יִהְיֶה:

According to Bemidbar only the Kohen may eat from the firstborn after it is sacrificed. Debarim, however, does not mention Kohanim. Rashi explains that Debarim also is speaking only to the Kohen:

### רש"י דברים פרק טו

(כ) לפני ה' אלהיך תאכלנו - לכהן הוא אומר, שכבר מצינו שהוא ממתנות כהונה אחד תם ואחד בעל מום, שנאמר (במדבר יח, יח) ובשרם יהיה לך וגו':

However, since pasuk 19 is surely directed at the owner, since he is responsible to make sure it does not work, it is only logical that pasuk 20 is also directed at the owner. Another explanation is that when the law of centralization changed, other laws that are connected with it also changed. When there were many altars in every village, there were many more Kohanim who needed to be supported. Now that the local sanctuaries are closed, the owner has an obligation to visit the Bet HaMikdash and has an opportunity to take part himself in this religious experience.