Points to Ponder

Behaalosecha master

**בְּהַֽעֲלֹֽתְךָ֙ אֶת־הַנֵּרֹ֔ת** **When you light the candles (8:2) – Rashi** cites the famous Midrash that identifies the connection between Behaalosecha and Naso as being based in Aharon’s distress over not being able to bring a korban. Hashem consoled him by noting that his opportunity was greater than that of the Nesiim because he would be able to light – and be Meitiv – the candles. **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein**  explains that the symbolism of *hatava* is dual: a readiness to roll up one's sleeves and apply oneself to a goal, and the emotional ability to invest today to harvest the fruits only tomorrow and sometimes tomorrow occurs much later than the following day. The *hatava* aspect need not diminish the daily enjoyment that must accompany every *ben Torah* as he deciphers a particular point over the course of study. Enjoyment that begins with *hatava* will reach the stage of *hadlaka* (lighting). The combination of effort that bears long-term fruit, with the experiential learning that provides short-term enjoyment, is particularly meaningful.

**בְּהַֽעֲלֹֽתְךָ֙ אֶת־הַנֵּרֹ֔ת Speak to Aharon and tell him that when he lights the candles (8:2) – Rashi** famously cites the Midrash that Aharon was disappointed in that he did not get a chance to participate in the Chanukas HaNesiim. Hashem promised him that his opportunity would be bigger than theirs in that he was to be able to light and maintain the Neiros. Rashi does not explain how the lighting of the candles is a bigger reward than the Korbanos. **The Midrash, as brought by the Ramban**, adds that while Korbanos only exist during the Zman HaBayis, the Neiros last forever through the Chashmonaim. The **Toras Yitzchak** learns that even though an event (candle lighting in the Beis HaMikdash) may be time specific – its influence remains strong long after the Churban.

**בְּהַֽעֲלֹֽתְךָ֙ אֶת־הַנֵּרֹ֔ת When you go up to light (8:2) - Rashi** cites the famous midrash that Aharon was distressed about his situation wherein he and his Shevet did not merit to participate in the Korbanos HaNeiim. Moshe consoled him by reminding him that his merit was greater. **Rav Chaim Kamil**  asked why it was that his Shevet didn’t merit the chance to bring a Korban? Rav Kamil answered that when we consider that the Nesiim were also the beaten police in Mitzrayim who took the hits for the people and Shevet Levi was not among those who were enslaved, it is clear why they did not have a Nasi represent them at this experience.

**בְּהַֽעֲלֹֽתְךָ֙ אֶת־הַנֵּרֹ֔ת When you light the menorah (8:2)** - Rav Sheises is quoted in the Gemara (Shabbos 22b) as noting that the light of the menorah is testimony that the Shechina rests among Am Yisrael.  **Rav Kook**  noted that there are 2 types of spiritual illumination. The first is internal and it is exclusive to the Jewish people. The world cannot appreciate or even recognize this illumination. The second is an external light that allows us to conduct ourselves with dignity. It is this combination that is the testament that the Shechina rests on Am Yisrael.

 **אל מול פני המנורה Facing the face of the menorah (8:2) - Rashi** explains that the side candles had a flame that faced inward toward the center. Yet, in Parshas Teruma Rashi notes that the candles themselves faced the center. **Rav Pinkus**  explains that there are 2 different ideas expressed here – one regarding the structure of the menorah and the other in terms of the flame – in Terumah we speak of the structure and here we speak of the flame itself.

**The seven candles shall illuminate (8:2)** – The **Yalkut Shimoni** notes that the reason Moshe only lit 7 candles and Shlomo lit 70 (he donated 10 menorahs to the Beis HaMikdash) is that Moshe only had to deal with the 7 nations that inhabited the land of Israel while Shlomo needed to interact with and overcome all 70 nations of the world. **Rav Elyashiv**  explains that the power to remain superior in the world comes from the illumination whose source is the Torah. The responsibility to illuminate is no longer limited to the Kohanim alone. Rather, wherever there is a Jew, there is potential for us to illuminate and radiate Torah and Torah values. When we do so, we thrive and are able to be supreme.

**וַיַּ֤עַשׂ כֵּן֙ אַֽהֲרֹ֔ן  Aharon did so (8:3) - Rashi** explains why the Torah finds it important to tell us that Aharon fulfilled the command of lighting the menorah – to tell us that Aharon didn’t change. Many meforshim question the chidush **Rashi** provides for us, as obviously we would never think that Aharon would veer even slightly from the command of Hashem! The **Sfas Emes** explains, the nature of man is that after doing the same thing day in and day out, it can lose its excitement or specialness. However Aharon did not change, meaning the same zeal Aaron had for this mitzvah on the first day he had for the rest of his life as well every time he lit the menorah.

**וַיַּ֤עַשׂ כֵּן֙ אַֽהֲרֹ֔ן  Aharon did so (8:3)** – **Rashi** cites the Sifrei who notes the praise of Aharon that he never changed the effort he put into lighting the menorah. **Rav Elazar Kahanow**  points out the uniqueness that Aharon had in embodying this ideal. Often we think that those who are known as the great compromisers need to compromise on their ideals in order to achieve compromise. Aharon, who was a master at achieving peace did not need to compromise on his ideals in order to get there.

**וְלֹ֨א יִֽהְיֶ֜ה בִּבְנֵ֤י יִשְׂרָאֵל֙ נֶ֔גֶף בְּגֶ֥שֶׁת בְּנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל אֶל־הַקֹּֽדֶשׁ There won’t be a plague when Bnei Yisrael approach the Kodesh (8:19) - Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov** commented that Hashem is telling us not to wait for a plague to approach Him. Some make a commitment to daily service only when they need to say Kaddish but Hashem is reminding us not to wait until we get to that point to start going to daven. Similarly, **Rabbi Eliezer Zev of Kartinznif** noted that we say Tehillim daily so that we will not NEED to say Tehillim.

**מבן חמש ועשרים שנה ומעלה יבא לצבא צבא This is what you do for the Leviim from 25 and above they shall serve in Ohel Moed (8:24)** – **Rashi** notes that elsewhere the age for working in the Mishkan was 30 not 25. He points out that there was a 5 year apprenticeship for the Leviim. He adds that one learns that learning takes 5 years of success before one can give up. But why does a Kohein not get the internship while the Levi, whose job is easier, gets 5 years? **Rav Bernard Weinberger**  suggests that a Kohein is retired as a result of mum while a Levi is retired at age. There is a limit to the time a Levi serves. Thus, in order to make sure that the Levi makes the most of his time, a solid intern period was demanded.

**Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Midbar Sinai in the second year post departure from Egypt (9:1)** – Why doesn’t the book of Bamidbar begin with this section? **Rashi** explains that this is a negative episode concerning the Jewish people – this was the only time in 40 years of desert living that they offered the Korban Pesach. Now **Tosafos** (Kiddushin 37b) notes that they were not obligated to bring the Korban until they entered the land. Why then is it so bad that they did not do something they were not obligated to do? **Rav Dovid Soloveitchik**  explains that the denigration is in the fact that their lack of obligation in the Mitzva came about as a result of their own doing – through the sin of the Miraglim. This also shows us that the main point of entering the land was the opportunity it would provide us for Mitzva performance. Any delay in the expanded opportunity is a denigration of the Jewish people.

**לָ֣מָּה נִגָּרַ֗ע Why should we lose out (9:7)** – Why did the people who couldn’t bring Korban Pesach Sheni ask the question? After all, once the time for the Mitzva passes, isn’t the Mitzva Batel? **Rav Dessler** explains that even when nature places a stumbling block toward the Mitzva, one needs to possess a desire to perform it. The emotional desire even without the physical ability to fulfill it, is essential. Moreover, when there is a high level of desire – Hashem can bring a person to a place where he wants to go. (He did so with Avraham didn’t he? Didn’t three people come to bring him a chance to perform Hachnassas Orchim beyond the natural means of the Mitzva?)

**Pesach Sheni (9:7)** – The section of Pesach Sheni is a strange one. It is odd to understand why the claim of “Lama Nigara” is a fair one. You were Tamai is the answer! How is it that they thought that such a question would be acceptable to Moshe? **Rav Chaim Sabato**  answers based on Rav Tzaddok that it was the question “Why should we lose out” that led to Pesach Sheni. Pesach Sheni is a second chance at joining in the mitzvah that made Am Yisrael a nation. One who recognizes the Mesiras Nefesh of the original declaration does not want to lose the chance to reclaim it. Recognizing that they are no less a part brings the person the chance to realize not his “Right” as much as his “Responsibility” to rendezvous with Hashem and stand up and be counted via a korban Pesach.

**לָ֣מָּה נִגָּרַ֗ע And those men said to him (9:7)** – Why does the Possuk seem to stress that the cousins of Moshe spoke to him directly. What does Moshe have to do with their Tumah status? **Rav Nissan Alpert**  explains that the people were those who were charged with the responsibility of carrying Yosef’s bier (the other side of the Midrash has a different interpretation). That responsibility was originally Moshe’s when he took the bones of Yosef out of Egypt. Moshe had to pass off the responsibility in order to be prepare to receive the word of Hashem at any moment. However, the cousins turned to him and asked “fine, you need to be Tahor in order to be ready to move up. But why should we LOSE on your account?”

 **לָ֣מָּה נִגָּרַ֗ע Why should we lose out (9:7) - Rashi** tells us that those who couldn’t bring the Korban Pesach wanted the Kohanim to sprinkle the blood for them and have other pure people eat on their behalf. Why would they make such a request? It doesn’t help fulfill the mitzvah at all? **Rav Moshe Feinstein**  explained that we see from here that even if one cannot fulfill a particular mitzvah, it is still worthwhile to participate in whatever way possible.

**לָ֣מָּה נִגָּרַ֗ע  Why should we lose out from being able to bring the Korban of Hashem within Am Yisrael (9:7)** - What did they mean “within the Am Yisrael”? Korban Pesach is a personal obligation is it not? **Rav Nisson Alpert** explained that Korban Pesach is a public Korban but is not funded by the public. It is also only offered on behalf of those counted in the group bringing it. Thus, if someone is not able to be counted, s/he loses the chance to be included in the Tzibbur and it is as if s/he doesn’t count. This is the intent of their complaint here -- we should not lose the chance to count in a Korban Tzibbur within Bnei Yisrael. If you take away that chance from us, we DO NOT count. That is not fair…

**למה נגרע Why should we lose (9:7)** – The relatives who buried Nadav V’Avihu were exempt from bringing Korban Pesach based on the principle of Oisek B’Mitzva. Why would a second chance make any difference if they were Patur? **Rav Nosson Tzvi Wachtfogel**  explains that it wasn’t the obligation that inspired the people, it was the opportunity to be close to Hashem in the moment of sharing Korban Pesach that they wanted. Through no fault of their own, they lost out. They wanted him to give them the second chance at the closeness.

**עִמְד֣וּ וְאֶשְׁמְעָ֔ה Stay here and I will listen to what Hashem commands to you (9:8)** - **Rav Aharon Soloveitchik**  explained that the times that Moshe tended to forget Halachos were often to establish certain Halachos. For the Mikosheish it was to teach the Dinei Nefashos and so he needed to hear the Halacha. When it came to the Pesach Sheni, it was not to learn the specifics of the Halacha but rather to evaluate the depression of the people and even in this matter, the Rav needs to evaluate the details.

**וְעֶ֖צֶם לֹ֣א יִשְׁבְּרוּ־ב֑וֹ And do not break a bone from it (9:12) - Rav Dovid Povarsky**  is quoted as noting that this Mitzva can be observed all year long. How? The Sefer HaChinuch notes that the reason for this Mitzva is that we are demonstrating that we are princes and not dogs who break bones to find food . Rav Dovid explained that this message applies all year -- that we are to act with honor for the Tzelem Elokim we possess and are obligated to demonstrate that honor with dignity all the time.

**On the day of the establishment of the Mishkan an Anan covered the Mishkan (9:15)** – This section opens a complete analysis of the Masaos. Both **Ramban and Sforno** explain that the Masaos teaches us that the movement and camping of Bnei Yisrael in the desert was only Al Pi Hashem, irrespective of personal desire. **Rav Simcha Zissel Broide**  added that there is an additional lesson -- that Torah and Mitzvos are Keva in our lives and everything else is but fleeting.

**עַל־פִּ֤י ה֙' יַֽחֲנ֔וּ וְעַל־פִּ֥י ה' יִסָּֽעוּ Based on Hashem they will camp and based on Hashem they will travel (9:20)** – The **Midrash Lekach Tov** notes that the Torah highlights the point of Hashgachat Hashem (Hashem’s direct involvement) in the Jewish nation to the degree that it does, in order to contrast our existence and relationship with Him as distinct from that of the other nations. **Rav Gifter** added that Hashem’s involvement with us is also dependent on the way we receive Him – Hence the rest of the Possuk. We need to comply with His word (hence the end of the Possuk that we kept the Mishmeres of Hashem) and His timing even when it does not fit our nature. Part of the success of our lives, adds Rav Gifter, is living with an ordered life based on Hashem’s timeline.

**By the word of Hashem they camped and by the word of Hashem they traveled (9:23**) – The **Solnimer Rebbe**  learned two valuable lessons from this section of the Torah. Firstly, when a Jew sets up his home, he needs to know that there are times of challenge and times of clarity in his relationships. How he chooses to proceed needs to be Al Pi Hashem (by the word of Hashem) in all instances. At the same time, the verses also speak to man’s Avodas Hashem. At times it is obvious that we are connecting to Hashem and it is easier to move forward in those times. At other times, we feel like we are in unchartered territory. At these times a more conservative approach might be important until we are sure of our footing in order to move on squarely and safely. (**Rav Baruch Simon**  has a beautiful essay on this topic based on the concept of Lo Shinah)

**כִּ֧י אִם־אֶל־אַרְצִ֛י וְאֶל־מֽוֹלַדְתִּ֖י אֵלֵֽךְ: For I will go to my land (9:30)** - How did Yisro leave? Wasn;’t he so connected to the legacy of Am Yisrael? **Ramban** explains that he wasn’t that far away for Har Choreiv is not far from Yisro’s house, **Abarbanel** adds that he went home to check the mail, water the plants etc. And now he was closing shop and making the full step toward commitment to the Jewish people. **Rav Menachem Penner**  added that there is an inherent lesson here: You cannot have it all in life. When one has a mission in life there are going to be sacrifices along the way. It was true for Yisro and for the Misonenim later in the parasha as well.

**עֲשֵׂ֣ה לְךָ֗ שְׁתֵּי֙ חֲצֽוֹצְרֹ֣ת כֶּ֔סֶף Make 2 Chatzozros for yourself (10:2) - Rashi** explains that Moshe could use these trumpets but no one else can. **Rav Aryeh Gurwicz**  quoted **Rav Yechezkel Abramsky**  who notes that the trumpets are the voices of each generation’s leaders. What works in one is different than what works in the next. Messages are the same but the means of conveying it are likely different in each generation.

**עֲשֵׂ֣ה לְךָ֗ שְׁתֵּי֙ חֲצֽוֹצְרֹ֣ת כֶּ֔סֶף Make 2 trumpets from silver (10:2)** - Why are the trumpets made out of silver specifically? **Rav Menacham Genack**  explained that silver is the currency of economy. Silver brings people together (hence the word for silver is also the word for currency -- Kesef). The goal of the trumpets too, was to bring the people together for all sorts of different purposes. Hence it needed to be silver.

**Make 2 Chatzozros for yourself (10:2)** – All Keilim that Moshe made are acceptable for future generation except the Chatzozros which were only ok for him (Menachos 28). Why were the Chatzozros any different**? Rav Betzalel Rudinski**  offered an insight garnered from **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky** who suggests that Noach was not successful because he spoke harshly to the people. In contrast, Yaakov was successful because he called the people “Achai – my brothers.” **Rav Yechezkel Abramsky**  added that in regard to the other Keilim, they are the same in each generation. However, in each generation it makes a difference as to how to call the people together. For that calling, each generation needs its own Chatzozros.

**וכי תבא מלחמה בארצכם When a war shall come in your land (10:9) – Rav Shlomo Goren**  blew shofar at the time of the capture of the city of Yirushalayim. **Rav Schachter**  explained to us that Rav Goren held that the time of the 6 day war was a Milchemes Mitzva and the blowing of the Shofar was part of the way that a Jew prepares for a Milchama. Ergo, one should know that the blowing of the Shofar at the different Yom Haatzmaut and Yom Yirushalayim events are really just a Zecher to that time when the blowing of the Shofar elevated the status of Tefillah to Zaakah. Rav Schachter added that there is a difference between the blowing of Rosh Hashana (Tekiya Terumah Tekiya) and the one of war (Teruah, Tekiya, Teruah). He quoted Rav Soloveitchik who said that the former is the story of man – who was created Yashar.

**He said to him “I will not go with you but rather will go to my land and my birthplace” (10:30)** – Having experienced the greatness of the Jewish experience with Maamad Har Sinai, why does Yisro refer to Midyan as his land and his birthplace? **Rav Soloveitchik**  answers that when it comes to a Ger (or even a Baal teshuva) we cannot and should not expect them to “forget their past” for memories of being young and earlier experiences are part of what make up a personality. Yisro understands this idea and desires to build upon it and bring others along in the process.

**וְהָיִ֥יתָ לָּ֖נוּ לְעֵינָֽיִם You will be eyes for us (10:31) – Rashi** explains that whatever we do not know, you will be able to teach us. What would that be? **Rav Yisroel Reisman** quoted that Satmar Rebbe, **Rav Yoel Teitelbaum** who explained that Yisro was to be the nation’s expert on Avoda Zara. When the nation would have questions about Avoda Zara and its service and what to stay away form etc., the biggest expert to them would be Yisro. In that regard, Rav Reisman explained, Yisro would take experiences he had, which were not positive, and use them for constructive purposes.

**אַל־נָ֖א תַּֽעֲזֹ֣ב אֹתָ֑נוּ כִּ֣י | עַל־כֵּ֣ן יָדַ֗עְתָּ חֲנֹתֵ֨נוּ֙ בַּמִּדְבָּ֔ר וְהָיִ֥יתָ לָּ֖נוּ לְעֵינָֽיִם Please do not leave us...you will be our eyes (10:31) - Rashi** notes that Moshe was making a request of Yisro not to leave. Why was Moshe so concerned about Yisro’s departure? And what does he mean that Yisro will be the “eyes” of the people? **Rav Nosson Tzvi Wachtfogel**  explained that Yisro’s journey to Judaism was the quintessential journey of a person who had it all -- he was a leader in the world of Avoda Zara -- and he left it behind because of the truth. He was persecuted because of his beliefs. Still, he withstood the tests. And he did it on his own. Yisro serves as the image of a person whose personal investment in a relationship with Hashem was not temporary -- it was permanent. He represents the ideal service to Hashem -- from and with a personal commitment to Hashem -- an ideal image for us to live up to.

**והיית לנו לעינים You will eyes for us (10:31)** - Why did they need Yisro’s advice or guidance when all of their travels were conducted based on Divine instruction? **Rav Eliyahu Meir Bloch** explains that unlike tzaddikim such as Moshe and Aharon who were born righteous, Yisro was unique in that he was selfmade and self-taught. Many Jews had difficulty looking to Moshe as a role model, as his greatness seemed so far removed from them. Moshe therefore asked Yisro to stay and serve as an example of what every person can become if he only recognizes and uses his latent potential.

**And when the Aron moved Moshe said Kumah Hashem. When it rested he said Shuvah Hashem (10:35)** – Why the different terminology? **Rav Mordechai Yehuda Zaks**  explains that when Bnei Yisrael rested in the Midbar one might look at them and think that they were a bunch of disparate groups. After all, each Shevet had its own leader and its own flag. Achdus was not apparent. However, when the Aron moved, Everyone moved behind the Aron in a single direction – with a common Oiev – hence the single word Oiveicha.

**קוּמָ֣ה  וְיָפֻ֨צוּ֙ אֹֽיְבֶ֔יךָ Rise up Hashem and let your enemies be scattered (10:35)** -  Why talk about war, enemies and haters when we take the Torah scroll out? **Rav Chagai Lundin** Ra”m Yeshivat Sderot explained that at the beginning of Bnei Yisrael’s trip in the desert there was an inevitable war. There were outer and inner struggles. This is how it is with every person: when we want to study, to move forward in life, to implement values we believe in, to settle in the Land of Israel – we must develop coping skills to face a raid of enemies, haters and distractors. We must draw strength from the Torah to cope with the difficulties but this, of course, is not the ideal, final situation. After we get strength and read from the Torah, after we are reminded of the values that guide us, we put the Book back in its place reciting a totally different perspective.

**וַיְהִ֛י בִּנְסֹ֥עַ הָֽאָרֹ֖ן When the Aron moved (10:35)** - This section is offset by 2 upside down letter ‘nun’s that highlight that this section does not belong here but is here because it is a sefer unto itself. Why is it set up that way? **Rabbi Dr. JJ Schacter**  noted that this is the nature of Jewish history when the Aron moves from place to place it protects us from the world outside that tries to swallow us whole. ON the other hand, there are times where the Aron stays in its place and it is we who need to return to it.

**וְהָֽאסַפְסֻף֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּקִרְבּ֔וֹ הִתְאַוּ֖וּ תַּֽאֲוָ֑ה Desired meat (11:4)** – How did it happen that the generation that had already received so much from Hashem, desired to simply sit and ask for more by way of asking for meat**? Rav Leib Chasman** explains that this is one of the dangers of the influence of the chevra. Once it becomes acceptable to sit on the sidelines and complain, there is no limit to the level of complaining that happens.

**מִ֥י יַֽאֲכִלֵ֖נוּ בָּשָֽׂר Who will feed us meat (11:4)** - How could the nation who had seen it all -- Kriyas Yam Suf, the war with Amalek, the giving of the Manna etc., how could it not figure out the picture ---choosing instead to complain**? Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah**  explains that this is one of man’s greatest challenges. Man needs to choose how to approach the moment and how to activate himself in the moment. When a person sees opportunity, s/he must choose to rise to meet it. Instead of merely talking and complaining, the people could have seen the challenges of the moment in context of the opportunity that it provided and the history of rising to meet the challenges in the past and to choose to solve problems instead of complaining about it.

**הִתְאַוּ֖וּ תַּֽאֲוָ֑ה Who will feed us meat? (11:4) – Rashi** comments that although the people HAD meat, they worried, because when you want to complain about something, there is always something to say. However, the truth is, that Sheker has no basis. Why then would this complaint have any traction? **Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop**  explained that when people are drunk on desire, logic is thrown out the window. When people desire something, the lack of quenching of that desire means that there is not enough or even – not present at all. Even the craziest thoughts reign, when what drives them is more emotional desire than logical explanation.

 **The desirous had a desire (11:4) -** The mis’avim complained about not having certain foods. Yet Chazal tells us that their complaint was really about the arayos restrictions. Why did Chazal not follow the pshat and just understand simply that their complaint was about the food? **Rav  Yaakov Kamenetsky** explains thatChazal understood true human nature. The complainers wouldn’t have issued such petty complaints about food unless there something latent that was really bothering them. They were really bothered about the arayos but it expressed itself in complaints about food.

**וְהָֽאסַפְסֻף֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר בְּקִרְבּ֔וֹ הִתְאַוּ֖וּ תַּֽאֲוָ֑ה The sin of the desirerers (11:4)** - What is the sin of the desirerers? Why does Hashem get angry at them MEOD? What is the big deal? **The Nesivos Shalom** explains that the problem with the people was that they sought a means to have someone teach them Taava. When a person replaces the emotional drive toward a desire with a cheap desire that is more attainable than a meaningful one, then Hashem is doubly upset with him/her. In the world of addiction, the deeper routed desire is covered by the easy route of attainment of that which is cheap. This makes Hashem quite upset for not only is it missing Hashem, it is misplaced and quashing of a capacity for Yediyas Hashem that is true and meaningful and deep.

**We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for Free (11:5)** – Do we really believe that the same Pharaoh who didn’t give them straw to make bricks for free actually fed them for free? **Rav Moshe Sturnbuch**  says no. The word Chinam here means without any spiritual responsibility. In Egypt Hashem took care of the Jews equally but in the desert each person’s experience with the Manna was dependent upon his or her spiritual level. The Jews feared being unable to maintain their lofty status and so, they complained.

**זָכַ֨רְנוּ֙ אֶת־הַדָּגָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־נֹאכַ֥ל בְּמִצְרַ֖יִם חִנָּ֑ם  We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for free (11:5) –** Were they really telling the truth? They were SLAVES. The fish that they ate, they paid for with their lives? **Sivan Rahav Meir Tchy”h** calls this the early reference to “fake news” that exists in the annals of people’s nostalgic minds. We remember things in the past in a more glorified manner than is really accurate and tend to make false and negative comments about the present state of things as a result. The danger of the fake news is often tragic and results in terrible consequences. It seems almost crazy to think that the Jews who left Mitzrayim in fine fashion, received the Torah, received the daily Manna and were in control of their own destiny really would trade it for some herring and garlic. But then again, don’t we do the same thing?

**וְהַמָּ֕ן כִּזְרַע־גַּ֖ד ה֑וּא The manna was like coriander seed (11:7) - Rashi** comments that the real reason for this possuk is that it is as if Hashem is telling the world to see what we, His children are complaining about. **Rav Pam**  noted that he still hears the claim of Reu Ba’ei Olam al Mah Misloninim Banai when families disagree about silly things -- especially at a time of Simcha like a wedding or where a young couple will go for a Yom Tov. We really need to update our focus on what is important.

 **The manna was like the seed of Gad and its luster was like crystal (11:7)- Rashi** says that whomever said the former did not state the latter – either one complains about the Manna or appreciates it. The Mechilta (Beshalach 14) details the means that the Manna would fall for the Jewish people**. Rav Zaidel Epstein**  notes that those who worried about tomorrow could not appreciate nor even experience the miracles in the Manna of today. This was the test of the Midbar – going B’Eretz Lo Zerua.

 **Moshe heard the nation crying to its families and Hashem was very angry and it was bad in the eyes of Moshe (11:10)** – What was gained from knowing about Moshe’s anger? Moreover, would one think that Moshe’s anger carried more weight than that of Hashem himself? **The Beis Yisrael of Ger**  explained that after the Cheit HaEigel, Moshe moved out of the camp and Rashi noted that Hashem told him that if I am angry and you are angry who will bring them back? The Beis Yisrael explains that Moshe’s anger reminds Hashem that someone needs to be the Mikareiv – and if it wasn’t going to be Moshe, it would have to be Hashem himself.

**כִּֽי־תֹאמַ֨ר אֵלַ֜י שָׂאֵ֣הוּ בְחֵיקֶ֗ךָ When you tell me to carry this nation (11:12**) - What is Moshe talking about? Hashem never told him to carry Bnei Yisrael? **Rav Yerucham Levovitz**  explained that when Hashem gives a person a talent, that is the command from Hashem to use it for the betterment of Am Yisrael. Moshe was given the strength and the Siyata D’Shimaya and thus it was expected that he would use it for Bnei Yisrael.

**אֲשֶׁ֣ר יָדַ֔עְתָּ כִּי־הֵ֛ם זִקְנֵ֥י הָעָ֖ם וְשֹֽׁטְרָ֑יו  That you know that they are the elders of the of the nation and its officers (11:16)** - Why do you need the people to be known as the elders and the officers? The Midrash reminds us that these people were the officers who were hit when the people did not produce the necessary number of bricks in Egypt. They took one for the team and therefore became the leaders. What is the connection**? Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi**  noted that care and worry about the people is something that does not go unpaid. Those with the extra layer of attention, of worry, of Rachmanus and of care, are those who are ready to lead the people.

**ואצלתי מן הרוח I will take from your spirit and give it to them (11:17) – Rashi** explains that this was done because in that moment Moshe was like a candle – whose flame gives over and yet is not diminished. **Rav Wolbe**  asks why Hashem needed to use Moshe. Why not give the Zekanim their power directly? Rav Wolbe answers that to properly receive Torah, one needs to get it from a source – from a Rebbe who makes the Torah power come alive.

**קִבְר֣וֹת הַתַּֽאֲוָ֑ה He called the place Kivros HaTaava (11:34) - Rav Dessler**  notes that the name of a place speaks to that which we learn from the place. Why is this place called Kivros HaTaava (death of desire) instead of Kivros HaMisavim (death of those who desired)? Rav Dessler explained that this is the critical lesson of the story. Namely, anyone who learns the story here about how the people complained and what it caused -- namely the death of the people --- will learn how to sublimate their desires appropriately.

**ַתְּדַבֵּ֨ר מִרְיָ֤ם וְאַֽהֲרֹן֙ בְּמשֶׁ֔ה And Miriam and Aharon spoke about Moshe (12:1-2)**- Why is this familial episode so important that it appears at this point in the Torah? **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah**  explains that in the process of nation building we often find disagreements even among the leadership. Moshe Aharon and Miriam can have differences of opinion about how a leader is to act and this too, can be a big part of the growth of the nation**. Rav Yechiel Yitzchak Perr** used to often note that in battles between big people it is more important to understand their positions than to worry about what YOU hold.

**וַתְּדַבֵּ֨ר מִרְיָ֤ם וְאַֽהֲרֹן֙ בְּמשֶׁ֔ה Miriam and Aharon spoke about Moshe (12:1) - Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski**  sharply criticized those who like to write psychohistories of Torah personalities. Aside from the presumptuous nature of such an endeavor, he explained that those who try to understand the actions of Gedolim through the measure of their own yardsticks are usually way off in their assessments. He used Miriam and Aharon’s criticism of Moshe decision to remain celibate, which the older sibings determined was against the Torah, as proof. They measured his decision against their interpretation and forgot to assess whether Hashem had instructed Moshe differently -- which He did.

**וַתְּדַבֵּ֨ר מִרְיָ֤ם וְאַֽהֲרֹן֙ בְּמשֶׁ֔ה Miriam and Aharon spoke about the Kushite woman that Moshe married (12:1)** -  The Yalkut explains that Miriam only had the best intent in speaking about Moshe. Why then do we draw so much attention to her and make her action one of those things we need to recall constantly? Isn’t that a bit unfair to her as a Baalas Teshuva? **The Alter of Slabodka** explained that when we embarrass the Kavod of a person it is such a serious matter that we want people to take extra precaution before doing it.

**וַתְּדַבֵּ֨ר מִרְיָ֤ם וְאַֽהֲרֹן֙ בְּמשֶׁ֔ה Miriam spoke about Moshe (12:1)** - When Miriam speaks lashon harah about Moshe Rabbeinu, we don’t find that he responds. All of klal Yisrael stops and one would expect a response, but yet Moshe Rabbeinu remains silent. **Dayan Swift**  explains that we learn from here that when leaders spend their time and energy responding to criticism, they will be “swept off their feet.” Leadership requires a “dignified unity” and “we must not barter our dignity for selfish interest.”

**וַתְּדַבֵּ֨ר מִרְיָ֤ם וְאַֽהֲרֹן֙ בְּמשֶׁ֔ה Miriam spoke about Moshe (12:1)** - How do we understand the conversation between Miriam and Aharon about Moshe? How do we understand the Rashi regarding the juxtaposition of this story to the story of the Meraglim? **Rav Soloveitchik**  explains that it has to do with the fact that they needed to understand the uniqueness of Moshe and they did not and the Meraglim, similarly, did not understand the uniqueness of the Land of Israel. More broadly, this points to understand the other’s perspective and ideas and only then assess and evaluate. Before we judge and evaluate others opinions, ideas, actions and perspectives, we must first truly understand them and their perspectives.

**Miriam and Aharon spoke about Moshe… They said, ‘Has the Lord spoken only with Moshe? Did He not speak with us, as well?’ And the Lord heard” (12:2)** - Why does the Torah emphasize that “the Lord heard” what was said about Moshe? **Ibn Ezra and Chizkuni** explain that Aharon and Miriam’s conversation took place in private, and not in Moshe’s – or anyone else’s – presence. **Ramban and Shadal,** claim that Moshe was indeed present and heard what was said. According to Shadal and Ramban, the Torah emphasizes that “the Lord heard” to indicate that God reacted angrily even though Moshe did not**. Rabbi David Silverberg**  points out that according to both interpretations, this phrase stresses the accountability we bear even for actions that appear to yield no impact upon others. We are responsible for what we say and do regardless of whether those actions or words affect anybody else. Even if nobody hears, we must remember that “va-yishma Hashem” – the Almighty assuredly hears and takes note. God’s constant presence suffices to demand proper speech and conduct under all circumstances and in every situation, even where it seems that our actions have no effect whatsoever on any other person.

**אם יהיה נביאכם ה' במראה אליו אתודע בחלום אדבר בו If someone among you experiences Divine prophecy, I will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak to him in a dream (12:6**) – Why are most Nevuos seen in dreams? **Rav Kook**  explained that dreams perform a vital function in the world. Great dreams are the very foundation of the universe. Dreams exist on many levels. There are the prescient dreams of prophets, and the conscious dreaming of poets. There are the idealistic dreams of great visionaries for a better world; and there are our national dreams of redemption — “When God will return the captivity of Zion, we will be like dreamers” (Ps. 126:1). While some foolishly take pride in being ‘realists and insist on taking into account only the present state of the world — a partial and fragmented view of reality, it is our dreams which liberate us from the limitations of the current reality. It is our dreams that accurately reveal the inner truth of the universe.

**בְּכָל־בֵּיתִ֖י נֶֽאֱמָ֥ן הֽוּא He is trusted in my entire house (12:7)** – What does this mean? **Rav Simcha Zelig Regeur asked this question to Rav Chaim Soloveitchik** who explained that while other Neviim had to clarify when they were speaking in Nevuah via the words Koh Amar Hashem, Moshe did not need to do so since he was already assumed to be speaking in the name of Hashem by virtue of who he was. The **Brisker Rav** added that therefore no Novi can challenge a Nevuah of Moshe since he is a Ne’eman.

**פֶּ֣ה אֶל־פֶּ֞ה אֲדַבֶּר־בּ֗וֹ  I speak to him mouth to mouth (12:8) - Rav Schachter** often pointed out that this comment in the Parasha is the connection to the Haftara. Hashem notes that Moshe Rabbeinu is the adon hanevi’im, the master prophet, and his prophecies were qualitatively different than those of the other prophets. Chazal (Yevamos 49b) describe the prophecies of the other prophets as comparable to one who looks through an obscure glass (aspaklaria she’aina me’irah), whereas Moshe Rabbeinu’s prophecies were comparable to someone who looks through a clear glass (aspaklaria hame’irah). The Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim (2:43) uses the prophecy of Zechraya that is found in the haftarah as an example of how obscure some of the prophecies were. In the haftarah, Zecharya sees a vision of a menorah and asks the malach to explain the vision. We see that in addition to the superficial connection between the Torah reading and haftarah, there is a deeper connection; the haftarah highlights the idea that the prophecies of other prophets were comparable to looking through an obscure glass.

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| **Miriam’s Tzaraas (12:10)** – The **Rambam (Tumas Tzaraas 16:10)** offers an extremely strong,  |
| long explanation as to how Miriam was able to engage in Lashon Hara and why she was punished. **Rav Mayer Twersky** noted that the Rambam’s progression – from frivolous idle  |
| chatter to heresy – is sobering. He explains that  | constant idle chatter is not simply a self- |

contained waste of time. Such mindless prattle lowers a person, making him petty and hungry for gossip. When he habitually indulges these inclinations, he becomes cynical. This is the inevitable result of engaging in *lashon hara* whereby one focuses on the faults and negatives within a fellow Jew. Speaking *lashon hara* bespeaks a cynical decision to focus on another Jew's faults, and ignore his virtues. The insidious process continues to inexorably unfold. Initially, one's cynicism may manifest itself only vis-à-vis one's neighbors or acquaintances. Inevitably, however, the cynical attitude engulfs one's attitude towards *tzadikim* and prophets, and ultimately even Hashem. Cynicism is the antithesis of faith. Our actions and speech reverberate. Whatever we do or say must be calibrated accordingly.

**רְפָ֥א נָ֖א לָֽהּ Please heal her now (12:13)** – Why did Moshe compose such a short Tefillah for Miriam? Didn’t she deserve something more substantial? **Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohein Kook** explained that Tefillah serves 2 different aspects. One is a refinement of character traits and a deepening of awareness and the other is a verbalization of that which is already known in the inner being of the person offering the tefillah. When it came to the Cheit HaEigel, Moshe knew he needed more Tefillah to help the people become aware of their failings andto help them become motivated to Teshuva, which they were. At the same time, Miriam had already been aware of her error and possessed a generally positive demeanor. Moshe’s Tefillah simply served to express outwardly that which was internally known and accepted. It required fewer words.

**Haftara**

**Zechairah (2)** – The Haftorah is often assumed to be connected to the Parsha because of its reference to the Menorah. However, the use of the image of the menorah is quite small – almost irrelevant to the theme of the Haftorah. What then is its connection to the text of the Parsha? **The Rambam (**Moreh Nevuchim II: 35-43) notes that there is a key difference between the quality of the Nevuah of Moshe Rabbeinu and that of other Neviim. Moshe received his Nevuah from Hashem directly while alert and awake. Other Neviim received Nevuah (prophesy) via an angel and in a dream – in an unclear mode (Aspaklaria Sheino Meira**). HaRav Hershel Schachter**  (intro to Sefer Ginas Egoz) notes that this is seen most openly in the Nevuah of Zechariah. Rashi notes that Zechariah’s Nevuos were so closed we are not sure of their entirety until a Moreh Tzedek will explain them. Zechariah’s Nevuah in the Haftorah was not even clear after he had it. Only after being asked by the Malach if he understands the message of the Nevuah, does Zechariah answer in the negative and has the Malach explain it to him fully. Herein, says **Rav Schachter** , lies the difference between Moshe and the other Neviim. Indeed, at the end of the Parsha, we read about Miriam and Aharon’s challenge to the difference between their qualitative prophesy and Moshe’s. Hashem underscores Moshe’s unique prophetic status by confirming it to Miriam and Aharon and then striking Miriam with Tzoraas. That difference, the supremacy of the Nevuah of Moshe continues to serve as a basic fundamental in the faith of the Jew until today.

**רָנִּ֥י וְשִׂמְחִ֖י  Rani V’Simchee (Zechariah 2)-** This is also the Haftorah of Shabbos Chanukah. What is its connection to the text of the Parsha? The **Rambam** (Moreh Nevuchim II: 35-43) notes that there is a key difference between the quality of the Nevuah of Moshe Rabbeinu and that of other Neviim. Moshe received his Nevuah from Hashem directly while alert and awake. Other Neviim received Nevuah (prophesy) via an angel and in a dream – in an unclear mode (Aspaklaria Sheino Meira**). Rav Hershel Schachter**  (intro to Sefer Ginas Egoz) notes that this is seen most openly in the Nevuah of Zechariah. Rashi notes that Zechariah’s Nevuos were so closed we are not sure of their entirety until a Moreh Tzedek will explain them. Zechariah’s Nevuah in the Haftorah was not even clear after he had it. Only after being asked by the Malach if he understands the message of the Nevuah, does Zechariah answer in the negative and has the Malach explain it to him fully. Herein, says Rav Schachter, lies the difference between Moshe and the other Neviim. Indeed, at the end of the Parsha, we read about Miriam and Aharon’s challenge to the difference between their qualitative prophesy and Moshe’s. Hashem underscores Moshe’s unique prophetic status by confirming it to Miriam and Aharon and then striking Miriam with Tzoraas. That difference, the supremacy of the Nevuah of Moshe continues to serve as a basic fundamental in the faith of the Jew until today.

**וִֽיהוֹשֻׁ֕עַ הָיָ֥ה לָב֖וּשׁ בְּגָדִ֣ים צוֹאִ֑ים And Yehoshua was wearing soiled clothing (Zechairah 3:3)** – **Rav Schachter** would remind us regularly that a person’s children reflect on him and his ability to impact the nation. Yehoshua Kohein Gadol’s grandchildren intermarried and it reflected on him since he had the ability to impact the situation and did not. Hence, in the vision, he is wearing soiled clothing – as what they were and who they were, reflected on him.

**: ויהושע היה לבוש בגדים צואים Yehoshua was wearing dirty clothes (Zecharia 3:7)** – How can the Bigdei Kehuna that are supposed to be for Kavod, be turned in a dream into filthy clothes? **Rav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro**  notes that the clothes are really symbolic of his children who were unworthy. He adds that we see that filth and sin are synonymous and that this is how we are to feel about each sin as it comes up.

**: מָ֥ה אֵ֖לֶּה אֲדֹנִֽי: Don’t you know what these are? (Zechariah 4:2)** - In the Haftara Zechariah has a vision and learns of its interpretation. What is the connection between the olives and the spirit of Hashem? Also, what DID Zechariah realize from the vision that the Nevuah begins with the words “Halo?” **Rav Eliyahu Schlessinger**  explains that Zecharia was not able to tell if the Nevuah was about present times or the future. The olives represented the Shemen HaMishcha but they were missing in the second Beis Hamikdash. It could possibly be disturbed in the future though capture by the enemy. However, Ruach Hashem would ultimately serve as a creator of Kedusha that would never be destroyed.

**- וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֵלַ֔י הֲל֥וֹא יָדַ֖עְתּ מָה הֵ֣מָּה אֵ֑לֶּה וָֽאֹמַ֖ר לֹ֥א אֲדֹנִֽי   He said to me don’t you know what these are and I said No my master (Zechariah 4:5) - Rav Schachter**  would often point out to us that an additional reason for reading this Haftara on this week is that the Haftara highlights the difference between Moshe’s level of Nevuah and that of the other Neviim. While the others saw through an unclear glass, like Zechariah who also didn’t fully get the message of his Nevuah initially -- Moshe was different. He saw with an Aspaklaria HaMe’irah- a clear image and understood his Nevuah power fully. This was Hashem’s response to Miriam at the end of the Parasha as well… Nevuah is different for Moshe and for other Neviim.

 **On one stone there will be seven pairs of eyes () – The Maharival** quotes the Mahari Bei Rav who was walking with his students and the Rebbe and his three students sat down on a particular stone to rest. One student asked to lighten the mood and received permission from the Mahari Bei Rav. He noted that the experience was reminiscent of Nevuas Zechariah because here too they were on one stone with 7 eyes (Mahari Bei Rav was blinded in one eye). The Mahari Bei Rav apparently found the comment humorous. **Rav Schachter**  would remind us that this is a proof that occasionally a possuk can be utilized in a humorous manner as a Melitzah.

**“On one stone there will be seven eyes** - Is it permissible to use a Possuk in context that was not the way it was intended? **Rav Schachter**  told the story of the MaHarival who was blind in one eye and was resting on a stone with 3 of his students. One turned and quoted the fact to the Rebbe that this is a kiyum of Al Even Achas Shiva Einayim. When things are a melitza – there is room to offer a novel example without concern for kefirah.