Points to Ponder

Bamidbar 5781

**בְּמִדְבַּ֥ר סִינַ֖י In the Sinai desert (1:1)** - Why was the Torah given in the desert and not in the land of Israel? **Rav Pinkus ztl.** explained that in order to cement the relationship and connection between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael, Hashem wanted Matan Torah to be without any distraction or Heisech HaDaas. It would then solidify the relationship and include a building of a home in Eretz Yisrael.

**בְּאֶחָד֩ לַחֹ֨דֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִ֜י בַּשָּׁנָ֣ה הַשֵּׁנִ֗ית On the first day in the second month in the second year (1:1)** - Why did Hashem make them wait to split into Degalim until the second year? Why not split them right away? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky ztl.** explained that Hashem did not want to break Klal Yisrael into Degalim because if he breaks them into small groups then whenever there will be a difference of opinion, it will lead to Machlokes. However, once there was a Mishkan, there would be a central focus which would unite the people despite their differences. Only then could they handle their degalim differences.

**לִבְנֵ֣י יוֹסֵ֔ף לְאֶפְרַ֕יִם To the children of Yosef for Ephraim (1:10) - Ramban** notes that when it comes to the Degalim, Ephraim comes first while in regard to the division of the land, it is Menashe who is introduced as the first of the children of Yosef. Why? **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that Yosef’s children excelled in different arenas. Ephraim was a Torah learner primarily while Menashe was an Askan par excellence. The Torah needs Askanus as it upholds the Torah but when giving the Berachos, Ephaim was put on a higher plane insofar as he was the Talmid Chacham. Here too, when it came to the issue of the Degalim which determined who would be close to Moshe Rabbeinu, the lead was given to Ephraim. However, when it came to dividing up the land which included Tzorchei Tzibbur, the primacy was given to Menashe.

**וְהַֽלְוִיִּ֖ם לְמַטֵּ֣ה אֲבֹתָ֑ם לֹ֥א הָתְפָּֽקְד֖וּ The Leviim were not counted among them (1:47)** - Why were the Leviim set aside for a counting separate from Am Yisrael? **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz ztl.** explains that those who were included in the census of 20 and above were destined to die in the Midbar because of the sin of the Meraglim. Seeing that, Hashem wanted the Shevet Levi not to be included in that census so that the tribe that as a whole did not participate in the sin, would not be included in the group that needs to be punished collectively.

**משֶׁ֣ה | וְאַֽהֲרֹ֣ן וּבָנָ֗יו שֹֽׁמְרִים֙ מִשְׁמֶ֣רֶת הַמִּקְדָּ֔שׁ Moshe, Aharon and his children, the keepers of the watch(3:38)** - The Gemara (Tamid 26a) learns that the Kohanim stand guard at three locations based on this possuk. But if the Kohanim (in this case Aharon Elazar and Itamar) were each in one of the guarding locations, how could they be available to do the Avodah? **Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl Shlita** explained that this is a proof to the words of the Rambam that Shmirah was only at night. Of course, we then need to ask that if they did the Avodah during the day and stood watch at night, when did they sleep? Rav Nebenzahl answered that they didn’t do the Avoda all day. Rather, when there was a lull in the work, they slept.

**וּפְקֻדַּ֞ת אֶלְעָזָ֣ר | בֶּן־אַֽהֲרֹ֣ן הַכֹּהֵ֗ןThe job of Elazar (4:16) - Ramban** points out that although the amounts here are intense Elazar was as strong as Yaakov Aveinu and was able to carry everything himself. How are we to understand that Elazar would be charged with the need to carry everything? The **Alter of Kelm** learned a valuable lesson from this charge. He explained that the Torah was telling us that whomever is greater than his friend his load is greater too. Elazar recognized the challenges in him and thus, the Torah symbolized the message in having carry all the elements of what he needed to be.

**אַל־תַּכְרִ֕יתוּ אֶת־שֵׁ֖בֶט מִשְׁפְּחֹ֣ת הַקְּהָתִ֑י Do not cut off the family of Kehas from the Leviim (4:18)** - **The Sforno** explains that we should not let everyone do the service based on who shows up first for this would lead to pushing and shoving and will be Michallel the Avodah in a way that it would be destructive to Am Yisrael. **Rav Gifter ztl.** noted that the source for Kares and death is from the lack of Seder in life. Even when one wants to demonstrate a fervor for Mitzvos, one needs to contain the fervor for Seder and orderliness as this is the will of Hashem.

Haftara

**וְאֵֽרַשְׂתִּ֥יךְ לִ֖י לְעוֹלָ֑ם And you will be bound to me forever (Hosheiya 2:21)** - Isn’t the order here out of place? Shouldn’t the Eirusin be first with Chessed, Mishpat Chessed Rachamim and Emunah and only then forever? Why the reverse? **Rav Yaakov Neuberger Shlita** suggested that first one needs to know that commitments are forever. Once one does, these commitments will be filled with all of the Chessed, Tzedek, Mishpat, Emunah and Rachamim