Points to Ponder

Emor 5779

 **לְנֶ֥פֶשׁ לֹֽא־יִטַּמָּ֖א בְּעַמָּֽיו For a soul he should not become Tamai (21:1) - Rashi** explains even if he was  Kohein Gadol and a Nazir who was going to prepare the Korban Pesach, he still needs to become Tamai for a member of the community. **Rav Elya Lopian ztl**. would quote in the name of the **Chofetz Chaim** that if the Torah goes so far in order to show respect for a person who passed having lived a life and performed some Mitzvos, how much more so must we show respect and care for the living while the soul is attached to the body.

 **וּבְאַרְצְכֶ֖ם לֹ֥א תַֽעֲשֽׂוּ And in your land you shall not make one (22:24) - Rashi** notes that this Halacha is obvious since it is a Chovas HaGuf -- Why would we even THINK to limit it to the land of Israel? Rashi adds that this teaches us that the rule here must come to add the Tamai. **Rav Chaim Feinstein Shlita** adds that the Chiddush works in the reverse. Lest someone think that the increase in animal population would prevent the Mitzva of Yishuv HaAretz and therefore would allow the castration of the animals specifically in the land, the Torah reminds us that in the land you may not do it either.

 **לִרְצֹֽנְכֶ֖ם תִּזְבָּֽחוּ: When you bring a korban to Hashem (22:29) - The Alter of Kelm** would often note that when we want to express our Hakarat Hatov to Hashem, we do so in the manner that expresses our emotions -- and the best way to show that emotion is with the fullest participation in Mitzvos. But why would bringing a Korban and consuming it within the right time be connected to Hakaras Hatov? He answered that when you care for someone, you want to do exactly as they would want … when it comes to listening to Hashem, that means creating Kiddush Hashem.

 **וּבַיּ֣וֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִ֗י שַׁבַּ֤ת שַׁבָּתוֹן֙ מִקְרָא־קֹ֔דֶשׁ On the seventh day it will be a Shabbat Shabbaton (23:3) - Ramban** explains that it will be an occasion of Kodesh. What does this mean? **Rav Yerucham Levovitz ztl.** explains that the day of Shabbos cannot be like a regular day -- man has a responsibility to make Shabbos into a special day -- a real holy experience that will stand out. Everything contributes to that experience -- the food, the drink and even what we wear hence the reference of Mikra Kodesh and the responsibility that Halacha provides to make it so.

**וּסְפַרְתֶּ֤ם לָכֶם֙ And you shall count (23:15**) - The Gemara tells us that it is a Mitzva to count weeks and to count days. Why we need to count both if when we count weeks we are, by definitions counting days? **Rav Chaim Pinchas Sheinberg ztl.** answers that the message here is that one plus one is not only 2 but things add up to a bigger picture until we get to the Sheleimus of Hashem.

 **וּשְׂמַחְתֶּ֗ם לִפְנֵ֛י  And you should rejoice in front of Hashem for 7 days (23:40) - Rav Aizik Sher ztl.** would often explain that the joy of the Yamim Tovim is not simply an outward display, that is not Hashem’s desire. Hashem desires an inner state of Simcha -- Ach Sameiach. It is the experience that changes man’s Avodah into Hashem’s desire of him.

 **מִחוּץ֩ לְפָרֹ֨כֶת הָֽעֵדֻ֜ת  Outside of the Paroches (24:3)** - Why is it that the location of the Menorah is identified on the basis of where it is NOT? Why highlight that it is OUTSIDE of the PAroches**? Rav Dov Kook Shlita** suggested that the Gemara (Shabbos 22b) notes that the western Ner of the Menorah is testimony to all of Am Yisrael that the Shechina rests on them. If that is the case, then the candle has to be visible to the people. That is why the Torah specifies that it is NOT hidden by the Paroches.

**Haftarah: Kedushas Kehunah - Rav Schachter Shlita** would often remind us that many people think the Jewish tradition is only about death. This week’s Haftarah also highlights the issue but not from the perspective of the dead, rather from the perspective of the one who is alive -- the Kohein. Even a Kohein is given the responsibility to show respect for the meis but the Kavod HaBriyos is a Kal V’Chomer for the one who is alive. And, although there is a well known Machlokes as to whether Lah Yitamah is an opportunity or a Chiyuv, it was a tradition that was handed down within the Kohein families going back to the times of the Mikdash. Rav Schachter would remind us of the famous Shittas HaRambam that ONLY the Kohein has a Chiyuv to become Tamai -- because this is a part of the expression of the Kavod HaBriyos.