Points to Ponder

Emor 5780

**אֱמֹ֥ר אֶל־הַכֹּֽהֲנִ֖ים בְּנֵ֣י אַֽהֲרֹ֑ן וְאָֽמַרְתָּ֣ אֲלֵהֶ֔ם Say to the Kohanim, sons of Aharon (21:1) - Rashi** notes that the double requirement to speak is to have the adults teach the children. But where do we learn that V’Amarta refers to teaching children? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** explains that it is not enough to teach children to just do Mitzvos because then the children will not stick to it in the future. Instead, parents need to speak to the children about the importance and value of following the Mitzvos. That way the child learns the rules but also the ability to understand the beauty of the Mitzvos and that they are not burdens. **Rav Yaakov Weinberg ztl** added that this is like the child playing with his friends when the ball rolls into the cemetery. The child is about to go in to retrieve the ball and his father pulls him away telling him that he cannot go in there. When the child questions why he cannot when everyone does, the parent should not only explain that he is a Kohein and is not allowed in, he should also explain that as a Kohein the child has a better status that carries more importance. The same is true for Am Yisrael. The nations may be able to do or eat whatever they want but we are more important and should be taught to appreciate that status.

**אֲשֶׁ֨ר יִֽהְיֶ֥ה בוֹ֙ מ֔וּם לֹ֣א יִקְרַ֔ב לְהַקְרִ֖יב  If he has a deformity he shall not come close to bring the bread of Hashem (21:17)** – Why does a physical deformity ruin a Kohein’s ability to serve in the Beis HaMikdah? **Rashi** notes (21:18) that bringing Korbanos to Hashem should be no lower than bringing one to a nobleman. When we present something, we need to be as presentable as the gift we are presenting**. Rav Belsky ztl.** adds that the Kohein is the representative of Klal Yisrael and his presentation to Hashem needs to be blemishless or he should not represent. Rav Belsky added that the same is true of us – we too, need to represent ourselves in the best way possible when we represent Judaism – we need to make sure we represent Am HaNivchar with a sense of Kedusha and reverence just like Hashem would expect from us.

**וּמִיּ֤וֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי֙ וָהָ֔לְאָה יֵֽרָצֶ֕ה לְקָרְבַּ֥ן אִשֶּׁ֖ה From the 8th day and onward it can be brought as a Korban (22:27)** – The **Midrash** notes that the reason is that one cannot see the king (Hashem) before experiencing Shabbos (the queen) first. This is true for humans (Bris is on the 8th day too) and animals. But why does an animal need to experience Shabbos? Will it make a difference? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** says that this is the power of Shabbos – it changes the experience of life for everyone. In fact, the Gemara (Zevachim 91a) notes that Shabbos changes the quality of a Korban (i.e. the Tamid) not directly connected to Shabbos per se and infuses it too, with the transformative power of Kedusha. The same is true for our animal. Shabbos will make its experience more Kadosh.

**לִרְצֹֽנְכֶ֖ם תִּזְבָּֽחוּ When you bring a Korban (22:29)** – Why do we highlight that the Korban Todah needs to be “L’Ratzon”? **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl.** answered that thanksgiving cannot be mandated, it needs to be heartfelt. This is the Toah’s point here specifically – that you WANT to bring the Korban because internally you want to – Tov, L’Hodos L’Hashem. Perhaps this is why in the future it will be the Todah that will not be Battel as opposed to the other Korbanos. The internal need to say thanks, will not be Battel in the future.

**וְלֹ֤א תְחַלְּלוּ֙ אֶת־שֵׁ֣ם קָדְשִׁ֔י  And you should not make a Chilul Hashem (22:23) - Rav Schachter Shlita** would often remind us that when an individual Jew acts improperly, he disgraces the entire Jewish people, as well as the Jewish religion. He would remind us of the story about the local Catholic bishop who commented to **Rav Yitschok Elchanan Spector** that one of the major causes of anti-Semitism was the Talmudic statement that "*atem kruyim adam ve'ein umos ha'olam keruyim adam*" - that  if the Jews do not consider non-Jews to be human beings, how could Jews expect anything less than animosity from non-Jews. However, Rav Yitschok Elchanan explained to the bishop that what the Rabbis mean to say was the following: In biblical Hebrew there are four terms for a person - *ish, enosh, gever,* and *adam*. The first three terms have a different form when used in the plural (*anashim, gevarim*). The last term - *adam* remains the same even when used to refer to many men. When any other individual who murders, steals, or acts improperly, we do not say that his behavior is representative of his entire nation. We would say that that individual is bad, but the rest of the nation as a whole is basically good. We distinguish between *gever* (in the singular) and *gevarim* (in the plural); between *ish* (in the singular) and *anashim* (in the plural). But with respect to the individual Jew, we call him "*adam*", used for both the singular and the plural, and assume that the individual is representative of the entire people. Only regarding the Jews is there a principle that "*kol Yisroel areivim zeh lazeh*". The concept of nationhood only applies to the Jews: "*Mi keamcha Yisroel goy echad ba'aretz*"; other peoples are called *"mishpachos ha'adamah*". Any individual Jew who behaves improperly brings disgrace upon his entire nation, as well as upon the entire Jewish religion exactly because we are all one "*adam*".

**בַּסֻּכֹּ֥ת תֵּֽשְׁב֖וּ שִׁבְעַ֣ת יָמִ֑ים You shall dwell in a Sukkah for 7 days (23:42)** – If Sukkos is known as the time of our Simcha, why do we go into the temporary dwelling to celebrate it? Wouldn’t it be MORE celebratory if celebrate in a more spacey, comfortable place? **Rav Menachem Genack Shlita** suggested that the point of the Mitzva of Sukkos is the idea that we are dwelling in the presence of Hashem and rely on him. That is also why we read Koheles on this holiday. Koheles also proves that all of the things we think bring us to Simcha are nothing compared to knowng that Hashem protects us which will bring us the ultimate peace of mind.

**וְשֵׁ֥ם אִמּ֛וֹ שְׁלֹמִ֥ית בַּת־דִּבְרִ֖י Her name was Shlomis Bas Divri (24:11) – Rashi** explains that we give her name to note that she was the only one who was a Zonah. She was called Bas Divri since she was too busy speaking to everyone, she was in everyone’s business and ultimately, they were in hers too. Does that mean that it is wrong to check in on everyone? **Rav Nosson Meir Wachtfogel ztl**. explains that there are times that there are boundaries in life. Hashem established boundaries from the time of creation. He created boundaries between Shomayim and Aretz, between animals on the land and others in the sea etc. Each animal thrives in his or her proper habitat – not when they overstep their habitats. Shlomis was guilty of having NO boundaries. She was in everyone’s business and without boundaries. That leads to destruction. There are levels of intimacy that are not “Hakol” all the same. Not everyone needs to know everything about every relationship. Our Shalom Bayis would improve if we understood and lived by that.

**Haftara: וְרֹאשָׁם֙ לֹ֣א יְגַלֵּ֔חוּ וּפֶ֖רַע לֹ֣א יְשַׁלֵּ֑חוּ They shall not shave their heads but also shouldn’t grow it wildly (Yechezkel 44:20)** – The Gemara (Taanis 17a) notes that the Anshei Mishmar are allowed to get haircuts in honor of Shabbos so that they not come into the Mishmar looking disheveled. Now, in regard to the Nazir, we find the opposite, that the Nazir is supposed to let his hair grow – as a sign of his holiness. Why the difference between the Kohein and the Nazir? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl** suggested that the difference was that a sign of Kavod toward Shomayim is when a person appears honored in front of people – hence he should be presentable and respectable. A Nazir does not perform service in the Beis HaMikdash, he is removed from Olam Hazeh. He has no one to dress for in order to impress.