

Kiyor (30:18)– Why is the Kiyor’s command in this week’s Parsha instead of in Parshas Terumah with the other Klei HaMishkan? And why is it between the Parshas Machatzis HaShekel and that of Ketores? **Rav Shmuel Brazil Shlita** explained that the style of the handwashing at the Kiyor (hand over foot) highlights the dual aspect of the Avodah service. The hand does the Avoda but the foot brings him there. It does not matter which part is longer or shorter, both are significant. The Machatzis HaShekel reminds us that no person is complete without being a part of a greater whole and the Ketores reminds us that even ingredients like the Chelbona which is foul smelling can become whole and play a role. The placing of the kiyor here reminds us that a Jew must believe that he can still have his service count even where he does not feel whole provided that he directs his Avodah fully to Hashem.

Behold I have called Betzalel (31:2) – Why does Hashem not say that he appointed Betzalel? **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that the Talmud in Berachos learns from here that public positions of authority need appointment and acceptance by the Tzibbur. Rav Schachter quoted Rabbeinu Tam who noted that even if someone was willing to pay to become Rav or Parnas of the Tzibbur, the Kahal cannot accept it unless he is Mirutze LaKahal.

This is your God Yisrael that took you out of Egypt (32:4) - The Midrash comments that in the same way it was good for our forefathers to receive the Torah and say Naaseh V’Nishma perhaps it was good for them to declare “this is your God Yisrael”? That is a troubling idea. Why would the midrash make such a troubling comparison between 2 seemingly isolated declarations? **Rav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht ztl.** noted that the connection between them was in the Hishlahavus. The inspiration for the positive was also the driving force behind the negative. Hishlahavus is a great thing when it is harnessed to a solid goal and focus. Unbridled Hishlahavus can be destructive and can destroy many futures.

Moshe said to Aharon what did this nation do to you that you brought on them a great sin (32:21) – How could it be that the very same Aharon who was involved in the Eigel would later serve as Kohein Gadol, the one destined to save the people and help them atone for the Eigel? **Rav Belsky ztl.** explains that based on the Gemara in Yoma (69b) about the nullification of the Yetzer HaRa for Avoda Zara in the time of Ezra, Nehemia and Zechariah HaNovi, it can be suggested that the same was true for Aharon who also sought to be Mivatel the Yetzer for Avoda Zara. However, whereas in the time of Zechariah Hashem accepted the nullification, he was not ready to cede the power of Nevuah that would need to be traded with the Yetzer for Avoda Zara. Aharon attempted a maneuver that as risky and ultimately put him into great peril. One so selfless certainly deserves to be a kohein for the people.

He said that he hears not the voice of strength nor the voices of weakness, just the Kol Anos (32:18) – **Ramban** comments that Moshe was showing Yehoshua that one need not hear sounds but rather needs to learn to distinguish between them. **Rav Wolbe ztl.** adds that that a leader needs to be able to distinguish between the sounds of war and the sounds of sichok. Perhaps one can suggest that the sounds of Sichok come when it is merely Anos – just to respond to responses. There is no goal except to respond and destroy.

He smashed the Luchos under the mountain (32:19) – After hearing about the Eigel from Hashem and hearing the sounds and still bringing the Luchos with him, what led Moshe to smash the Luchos when he did? **Rav Haim Sabato Shlita** quoted **Rav Goldvicht ztl.** in the name of **Rav Hutner ztl.** who explained that the difficulty that Moshe had was the thought that they could have the Luchos and still revel in the

Avoda Zara. It was the dancing, that showed that the people fully identified with their act. That being the case, Moshe had no choice but to smash the Luchos – comfort with Avodah Zara cannot be coupled with the acceptance of the word of Hashem.

And no man shall desire your land when you go up to Aliya L'Regel (34:24) – Rav Meir Shapiro ztl. points out that the vacation of Aliyah L'Regel is not for an appreciation of the physical beauty of the city of Yirushalayim but rather for its spiritual beauty. That is the intention of the Torah when it notes that no one will desire “your land” for after all, everyone wants Yirushalayim. Instead, the intention is for the nature (Pesachim 8b no Peiros Ginosar in Jerusalem so that the Aliyah L'Regel would not be tainted by ulterior motives.

Haftorah: How long will you pass on two opposing sides? If you shall side with Hashem side with him and if with the Baal, so follow Baal? (Melachim I) – How could Eliyahu HaNovi suggest that Jews choose Baal? Isn't the choice one of sending Jews away from Hashem? Isn't there a middle ground? **Rav Pam ztl. quoted Rav Chaim Soloveitchik ztl.** who explained that the choice is not a partial one. One cannot have faith in Hashem AND Baal. So by choosing Baal, a Jew is choosing not Hashem. As he famously quipped: “A Shtikle Apikorses is a complete Apikores.”