Points to Ponder

Ki Tze Tze 5780

**כִּֽי־תֵצֵ֥א לַמִּלְחָמָ֖ה When you go to war (21:10)** - How can we effectively plan for war? The **Chofetz Chaim** explained thatthe Torah knows how overwhelming the experience of war is. It’s possible to lose sight of the value of the individual during war time. But those people are still people and they still have all their personal struggles, and those personal struggles just end up being ignored. The Torah doesn’t see it that way—the Torah notes that the individual and the community both count.

**כִּי־יִֽהְיֶ֣ה לְאִ֗ישׁ בֵּ֚ן סוֹרֵ֣ר וּמוֹרֶ֔ה Ben Sorer U’Moreh (21:18)** - **Rav Schachter Shlita**  pointed out that one of the messages of Ben Sorer U’Moreh (the rebellious son)  is that one should love Hashem even more than his children. The **Chovos Halevavos** says that one’s love for his family and friends is a part of one’s Avodas Hashem since God commands you to love them. Your love for everyone else should be an example of your love of God. (Avraham Aveinu experienced this test at the time of the Akaida).

**כִּ֣י יִקָּרֵ֣א קַן־צִפּ֣וֹר | לְפָנֶ֡יךָ בַּדֶּ֜רֶךְ בְּכָל־עֵ֣ץ | א֣וֹ עַל־הָאָ֗רֶץ  When you happen upon a bird’s nest on the ground (22:6)** - The Gemara (Chullin 139b) asks that if one finds a bird’s nest on his head is he obligated to perform Shiluach HaKaan. The Gemara determines that the answer is yes since we find a second possuk that compares the top of the head of a person to Adama -- earth. **Rav Wolbe ztl.** explains that the Gemara is reminding man that even after being created, man is lowly -- like a clump of earth. But notwithstanding man’s nature, he can rise to the highest of levels -- his potential is unlimited. Harnessing our power toward the service of Hashem can bring Geulah to the entire nation.

**כִּֽי־יִפֹּ֥ל הַנֹּפֵ֖ל מִמֶּֽנּוּ: So that no one should fall from it (Devarim 22:8)** - If the person who might be killed if there were no fence did not deserve to die (in this manner), would he fall just because the homeowner did not build a fence? If indeed he would not fall, why is there a need for the *mitzva* in the first place**? Rav Yosef Carmel Shlita** explains that one approach is that of **Kli Yakar** who notes that the fence saves only the one who wasn’t supposed to fall. It is not clear if he means that the saved person would not have fallen or that he would have fallen elsewhere or died in another way, assuming it was not destined how and where he would die. **Sefer HaChinuch** notes that when one relies on a miracle s/he doesn’t receive it.  It does not take a miracle to spend time on roof without a fence and not fall.  The fence just reduces the risk a little more. According to this idea, the mitzva of Maaka suggests that if 1,000 Jews (not *tzaddikim* like Avraham) without a decree to die decide to ignore proper safety precautions and enter a 1/100 chance of death situation, approximately 10 will die from it. This is an important opinion to consider for those who, to use just a couple of examples, drive less carefully than they should, smoke, eat unhealthily, or ignore the risks of dangerous infectious diseases.

**עַל־דְּבַ֞ר אֲשֶׁ֨ר לֹֽא־קִדְּמ֤וּ אֶתְכֶם֙ Because they didn’t greet you with bread and water (23:5) - Rashi** notes that they gave you advice in order to get you to mess up. In the Torah, 2 different ideas are the reason to keep them out. They hired Bilaam and they didn’t greet you with food. But Rashi adds that they tried to lead you astray. Why does Rashi provide a third reason? **Rav Nosson Wachtfogel ztl.** explained that Rashi is showing you the explanation of their thinking. Lest someone think that there were mitigating factors -- not feeding you and hiring Bilaam as defense moves -- Rashi corrects that and tells us that their intention was offensive not defensive and thus they can never join our people.

**נָקִ֞י יִֽהְיֶ֤ה לְבֵיתוֹ֙ שָׁנָ֣ה אֶחָ֔ת וְשִׂמַּ֖ח אֶת־אִשְׁתּ֥וֹ אֲשֶׁר־לָקָֽח He shall be free for his home for a year and gladden his wife (24:5) - Rashi** quotes **Onkelos** who explains that he will gladden his wife and one who says he should be happy WITH his wife is mistaken. **Rav Pam ztl.** noted that there is a deep message here. Sometimes couples think that the job of a marriage is to be happy together. But that is not the message of marriage. To have a successful marriage one needs to place his focus on making his wife happy. Not that he be happy with her. This is the key to a successful home.

**אֲשֶׁ֨ר קָֽרְךָ֜ בַּדֶּ֗רֶךְ  Who cooled you (25:18) - Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztl** noted the famous comparison to a kettle which when heating water needs to be consistently on the flame because if it is not, the water will never boil. Rav Nosson Tzvi noted that the same is true for us -- if we are not constantly involved in learning, we too, can be cooled down. He added that this is a constant battle in our lives -- especially in the arena of spiritual growth -- to work not to be cooled down.

**Haftara - For this is the waters of Noach to me (Yeshayahu 54:9) - Rav Eytan Feiner Shlita** once recalled the comment of **Rav Yaakov Weinberg zt”l** who observed that Noach’s Ark encompassed the entire future of the world within. For with the whole world being destroyed, the future of mankind remained safely ensconced inside the Teivah of Noach. Not coincidentally, though, the word teivah not only means “Ark,” but “word” as well. Every word which escapes our mouth holds the potential of either building or breaking lives. The future of the world rests no less than at the tip of our tongue.