Points to Ponder

Naso 5779

**וּפְקֻדָ֕יו אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּ֥ה And its numbers were as Hashem commanded Moshe (4:49) -** **Ramban** notes that the message here is to teach us that each descendant of Levi is given a specific job and doing the wrong one is punishable by death. **Rav Zeidel Epstein ztl.** pointed out that the Ramban is highlighting an important concept -- that each person needs to know his or her place and job in life and to value it specifically. Taking someone else’s job in place of one’s one is a double-fail -- wanting someone else’s purpose and neglecting one’s own.

**וְהִתְוַדּ֗וּ אֶת־חַטָּאתָם֘ אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשׂוּ֒ They will admit their sins (5:7)** - When we introduce Vidui we add the phrase that Hashem knows both the hidden and the revealed. That Hashem knows the hidden is a great description of Hashem but that He knows the revealed? Who doesn’t? **Rav Eliyahu Lopian ztl.** explained that this is the point. Even the things we think we know are not as revealed to us as they are to Him.

**אִ֥ישׁ אִישׁ֙ כִּֽי־תִשְׂטֶ֣ה אִשְׁתּ֔וֹ  When a man’s wife goes astray (5:12) - Rashi** explains that adulterers do not commit adultery unless they have a moment of insanity. Why do we find them guilty then? Isn’t a person who is insane exempt from Mitzvos (Chagigah 20)? **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz ztl**. explained that this is like the person who sees an open pit with a fence surrounding it. The person breaks the fence and falls into the pit and claims damages for falling into the pit. Realistically the judicial system might see his point about the pit but will find him responsible for bypassing the fence in the first place. Similarly, one does not have permission to violate the space of the sin even if later s/he will be found temporarily insane.

**וְהֵבִ֤יא אֶת־קָרְבָּנָהּ֙ עָלֶ֔יהָ Her korban will be from barley with no oil or Levonah (5:15) - Rashi** explains that she did an act of animals and thus her korban is such, there can be no oil because we do not want to make her Korban appear to be Mihudar. We leave out the Levonah not to make the person be reminiscent of the Imahos. Why do we not highlight other aspects of the accusation? Why the stress on the light and the Imahos? **Rav Yosef Leib Bloch ztl.** explained that sometimes the trick of the Yetzer HaRa is to look at things that are not as serious in the eyes of the transgressor. However, in the moment these transgressions are serious enough that they make an impression on the person and bring him or her closer to sin.

**אִ֣ישׁ אֽוֹ־אִשָּׁ֗ה כִּ֤י יַפְלִא֙ לִנְדֹּר֙ נֶ֣דֶר נָזִ֔יר  A man or a woman who takes the Neder of Nezirus (6:2) - Rashi** notes that someone who sees the Sotah in her disgrace will swear off wine with a Neder of Nazir. **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted that while normally we eschew the extreme, our views need to be different especially today. For we live in a generation of instant communication. Everyone around the world is notified immediately about all the *ganovim* and all the *sotos* anywhere in the world. We do not just see one *sotah*, rather we are made aware of many *sotos*. Although under normal conditions it would not be healthy to follow an extreme path in life, in our circumstances extreme measures are recommended. Moreover, this recommendation is true not only in the area of *bein adam laMakom*, but also in the area of *bein adam lachaveiro*. We are surrounded with many who cheat in business, cheat on income tax, sales tax, etc. We should be careful not only to be honest and follow the law, but even bend over backwards to make sure that we don't follow these extremely improper practices of our society. The Talmud describes *kosher* fish as having a backbone, and having the ability to swim upstream, i.e. against the current. Jews must always develop such a backbone and see to it that they swim against the current.

**וְאַחַ֛ר יִשְׁתֶּ֥ה הַנָּזִ֖יר יָֽיִן: Afterward the Nazir will drink wine (6:20)** - Once his Korbanos are offered and he is even able to drink wine, why is he still called a Nazir? **Rav Yitzchak Ezrachi Shlita** explains that we learn a valuable lesson from here -- that when someone takes on a status or strives to reach a level in his or her spiritual life, the experience does not leave him and s/he cannot ever go back to not having the status. Although the Nazir’s restriction period is over, s/he will always be a Nazir with the spiritual lessons that the status brought.

**וְשָׂמ֥וּ אֶת־שְׁמִ֖י עַל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל And they will place my name on Bnei Yisrael (6:27)** - The Gemara in Sotah (39a) notes that after the Kohanim give their Beracha to the people they turn to the Heichal and tell Hashem that they did as asked and now wish that He do as promised -- Hashkifa M’Meon Kodsheicha (See also OC 128:15). Why this particular possuk? It has more to do with Vidui Maaser than Birkas Kohanim no**? Rav Nebenzahl Shlita** explained that the Possuk refers to the verse in Divrei Hayamim II (30:15) where the Kohanim offered a Beracha to Meon Kodsho -- teaching us that the Beracha comes to Meon Kodsho and from there spreads throughout the world.

**Haftara - Manoch and his wife (Shoftim13 ) - Rav Amnon Bazak Shlita** notes that it is interesting that Shimshon, uniquely among the Neviim, is introduced with an extreme foray into the lives of his parents. Why? Rav Bazak explains that each of the parents represents a certain weakness that existed in the people at the time that Shimshon’s leadership would need to overcome. Manoach seemed to display a certain weakness in his spirituality -- hence the focus on his disbelief in his wife and her instructions and even when repeated to him, his discomfort with having come into contact with a Malach. His wife, although more spiritual, seems to suffer from a weakness in her nationalism -- that the people would eventually defeat their Plishti oppressors. Hence, although she receives certain instructions and certain promises from the Malach, she only reports the instructions to Manoach but not the promise.