Points to Ponder

Naso 5781

**נָשׂ֗א אֶת־רֹ֛אשׁ בְּנֵ֥י גֵֽרְשׁ֖וֹן Naso – Lift up the heads of Bnei Gershon (4:22)** – The **Rambam** notes that the Leviim are to be compelled into serving in the Mikdash whether they want to or not. **Maharal** explains that the people's observance of the Torah cannot be based simply on voluntarism and good will. It needs to be based on coercion, on commitment, on worship of God; one must keep mitzvot because one is obligated to do so, and not simply because one desires it. **Rav Yehuda Amital ztl.** added that many people, especially in recent years, approach the Torah based on a spirit of voluntarism. They want to fulfill those parts of the Torah that "speak to them," and operate without this feeling of commitment. This is what the Gemara's statement that "God suspended the mountain over them" comes to teach us: Torah can only be fulfilled properly through a sense of commitment to the word of God, and not by doing just what one wants to do.

**וּבְשֵׁמֹ֣ת תִּפְקְד֔וּ And you will assign them by name to each job (4:32)** – The **Tur** notes that that although it is mentioned in regard to the Children of Merari it applies to Kehas and Gershon too. Why were the Bnei Merari selected? **Rav Shimon Schwab ztl**. noted that those who carry the beams (Bnei Merari) are symbolic of the donors to Torah. Kehas and Gershon? Symbolic of those who study Torah. In the same way that Moshe put Zevulun before Yisochar in his Berachos to highlight the Hakaras Hatov for those who give to Torah, Merari was noted by name to highlight that each donor is deserving of praise.

**אִ֥ישׁ אִישׁ֙ כִּֽי־תִשְׂטֶ֣ה אִשְׁתּ֔וֹ  When a man suspects his wife (5:12)** – Why is the section of the Sotah here? The **Mikdash Mordechai** explains that the placement of the Sotah here as we enumerate the ideas of family in regard to building the Jewish nation conveys the idea is that Klal Yisroel as a whole is not stronger than those individual families. The Torah is telling us that when the basic family unit breaks down, eventually Klal Yisroel as a great nation breaks down as well. If there isn’t a secure family unit, then the result will be a suspected adulteress wife, and eventually the whole structure will collapse, since there is no L’mishpechosam l’beis avosam.

א**ִ֣ישׁ אֽוֹ־אִשָּׁ֗ה כִּ֤י יַפְלִא֙ לִנְדֹּר֙ נֶ֣דֶר נָזִ֔יר A man or a woman who will separate himself to make a vow to become a Nazir to Hashem (6:2)** – The **Targum Onkelos** explains that he needs to express his Neder explicitly. **Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl.** noted that the implication is that one who is not explicit has a loophole. He added that one should take advantage of that loophole as Hashem prefers us not to add restrictions upon ourselves beyond those of the Torah.

**וְאַחַ֛ר יִשְׁתֶּ֥ה הַנָּזִ֖יר יָֽיִן And afterwards the Nazir (one who vowed to abstain from drinking wine for a period of time) may drink wine.” (6:20)-** Why does the Torah still refer to him as a Nazir at the time that he can drink wine? **The Alshich** explains that since he did it to elevate his spirituality, when he stays on that level, the Torah still refers to him as a Nazir. Similarly, the spiritual growth we get from learning Torah, doing a mitzva, or observing a holiday, is meant to be permanent.

**וְשָׂמ֥וּ אֶת־שְׁמִ֖י עַל־בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל  And they shall place my name on Bnei Yisrael (6:27) –** If a Kohein Duchans in one place, can he go and do so in another and make the Beracha again? **Rav Schachter Shlita** reminded us that since a Kohein only needs to make the Beracha once a day (See Mogen Avraham 128:3; Chiddushei Rabbi Akiva Eiger 345; Levush) a Kohein may not make the Beracha in a second Shul. However, the Meiri (Megillah 27) noted that one of the Tannaim noted that he merited long life since he never ascended the Duchan without a Beracha. Meiri says that this means that even though he had already made the Beracha and was no longer obligated, he did so anyway and merited long life as a result.

**Haftara**

**וַתָּבֹ֣א הָאִשָּׁ֗ה וַתֹּ֣אמֶר לְאִישָׁהּ֘ לֵאמֹר֒ The woman came and told her husband saying a Malch came (Shoftim 13:6) -** Why does she leave out the fact that the Malach also confirmed that the lack of children came from her? **Rav Binyamin Eisenberger Shlita** suggested that she understood that it would be easier to promote Shalom Bayis if it appeared to be authentic and not a mere cry of “you were right”. **Rav Chaim Ephraim Zeitchik ztl.** suggested that we see how hard it is to admit to truth from her omission. The **Meshech Chochma** noted that the real reason was so that her husband would continue to ask for Rachamim.