Points to Ponder

Naso 5783

**כָּל־הַפְּקֻדִ֡ים אֲשֶׁר֩ פָּקַ֨ד משֶׁ֧ה וְאַֽהֲרֹ֛ן וּנְשִׂיאֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל אֶת־הַֽלְוִיִּ֑ם לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָ֖ם וּלְבֵ֥ית אֲבֹתָֽם The Leviim to their families (4:46)-** Why are we highlighting the families of the Leviim? And why are they counted separate from the people? The **Midrash Tanchuma** explains that it is because of the uniqueness of Shevet Levi , associated as the legion of the king, to be counted alone. At the same time, we also know that they were counted separately as they earned the right to enter Eretz Yisrael for not being involved in the Eigel. In that regard, they replaced the Bechorim from each family who were originally supposed to take care of the Mikdash. **Rav Avraham Rivlin** added that this change allowed for an exchange for a family centered Kedusha to a united, centrally organized, Kedusha that would include the families and the greater Jewish family together.

**וְהִ֣יא נִטְמָ֑אָה And she became Tamai (5:13)** – Why is the concept of Tumah introduced here in regard to adultery? It seems out of place! **Rav Schachter quoted the Avnei Nezer** who noted that any loss of Kedusha leads to Tumah. When a marriage, which is built on Kedusha has a gap in it, that gap (as with the adultress) creates airspace of Tumah. Hence the title.

**וְהֵבִ֤יא אֶת־קָרְבָּנָהּ֙ עָלֶ֔יהָ עֲשִׂירִ֥ת הָֽאֵיפָ֖ה קֶ֣מַח שְׂעֹרִ֑ים And the man shall bring his wife to the Kohein and she shall bring a Korban of barley (5:15)** – Why does the Sotah bring a Korban specifically of Barley? The **Bobover Rebbe** quotes the famous comment of the Gemara that she had acted in a manner of animals and so her Korban is the food of animals. The issue is that the food of animals is one of rushing. If she sinned, the Korban references and atones for the sinful behavior of rushing to sin. If not, the reward for the accusation is a rush on the process of continuing life – birth.

**כִּ֤י יַפְלִא֙ לִנְדֹּר֙ נֶ֣דֶר נָזִ֔יר When he sets himself apart (6:2)- Rashi** quotes the famous comment that whoever sees the Sotah in her defilement will take a Nezirus from wine. Why does he need to see the Sotah? Why is it not enough that this is the Mitzva of Hashem? **Rav Moshe Wolfson** explains that This teaches us that when someone sees Torah violations, s/he needs to know that there is something wrong within him/her that is leading Hashem to include him in the process. When there is awareness of sin on a personal front, even the onlooker needs to know that this is not haphazard but rather a message from Hashem that we need to consider changing our own actions and life path.

**לְהַזִּ֖יר To be a Nazir (6:2)** – On the one hand, the Nazir is called a crown wearer and at the same time, he is called a sinner for denying himself benefit from Hashem’s world. How do we understand the diametrically opposing associations? **Rav Elyakim Schlessinger** explained that Prishus or separation from this world is a means of serving Hashem but Hashem does not want us to serve him only through Prishus. We are supposed to use the things Hashem gave us in order to properly serve Him in Ruchniyus. Nezirus is a means for a person to rid himself or herself from earthly desires . If they are only temporarily gone, that’s a sin.

**וִֽיחֻנֶּֽךָּ V'Yechunecha (6:25)** – The Midrash notes that this means Hashem will send the awareness that we should show Chein and mercy toward one another. **Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi** notes that it is a big beracha to receive compassion and mercy but it is an even bigger beracha to know how to provide compassion in the mercy. It is a step that requires Daas to make it happen.

בַּיּוֹם֙ הַשֵּׁנִ֔י הִקְרִ֖יב נְתַנְאֵ֣ל בֶּן־צוּעָ֑ר **On the second day, Nesanel Ben Tzuar brought the Korban (7:18)** – Why does the Torah spend so much time on the Korbanos of the Nesiim. **Rav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht ztl.** used to note that based on the Midrash, each Nasi had different intentions that led him to bring the particular korban that he brought. Although the ends were the same, the reasons were different and worthy of elaboration in the Torah. **Rav Schach ztl**. adds that in Shomayim, Hashem doesn’t only appreciate the masses but celebrates with each individual as if he were the only one in the world.

**Haftara**

**מִכֹּ֛ל אֲשֶׁר־אָמַ֥רְתִּי אֶל־הָאִשָּׁ֖ה תִּשָּׁמֵֽר Whatever I told the woman you should do (Shoftim13:13)** - Why does Manoach ask for a malach to come and teach the laws of nezirus? Why didn’t he just consult with someone else? Also, when the malach comes back and gives the instructions, he doesn’t seem to say anything new. What was the purpose of this visit? **Rav Shimon Schwab** answers that Manoach was bothered by the following “How could I teach my son to be a nazir if I myself am not a nazir?” To this, HaShem sent a malach who tells Manoach מכל אשר אמרתי אליה תשמר. If you want your son to follow, you personally have to keep everything that I told your wife that your son must keep.