Points to Ponder

Pinchas 5780

**הִֽנְנִ֨י נֹתֵ֥ן ל֛וֹ אֶת־בְּרִיתִ֖י שָׁלֽוֹם I am giving him my covenant of peace (25:12)** - The Midrash notes that Hashem notes that technically he deserved the reward thus he is given the covenant of peace. But why is he any different than anyone else who is supposed to receive reward? Why does he get his right away and the rest of us wait until Olam HaBa? **Rav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht ztl.** explained that while when we follow Mitzvos we also subscribe to the doctrine that comes with it -- that the reward comes L’Olam Haba. But Pinchas’s action was not a requirement. It was a choice -- Kanaim Pogim Bo. He was Moser Nefesh for the Mitzva and thus Hashem sped it up for him too.

**וְשֵׁם֩ אִ֨ישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵ֜ל הַמֻּכֶּ֗ה The name of the Jewish male who was killed…(25:14)** - Why does the Torah tell us about the familial connection of the sinner? Why do we care who the Rasha was related to? **Rav Eliyahu Schlessinger Shlita** explained that when a person does something wrong, we do not simply choose to hold him responsible (in Shomayim) for the bigger failings. Instead, in Shomayim you are held liable for all of the mistakes and sins you do. Thus, while Zimri was killed because of his sin with Kozbi, he is not exempt for embarrassing his family in the process and thus it is in the text too.

**צָר֖וֹר אֶת־הַמִּדְיָנִ֑ים Destroy the Midyanim (25:17)** - Why were Bnei Yisrael so eager to destroy the Amalekim in Cannan (in Parshas Chukas)  but were reluctant until commanded to kill Midyan despite the fact that the latter caused the deaths of 24000 people? **Rabbi David Holzer quotes Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** who noted that the difference in approach was built around the idea that when we are attacked openly we are ready to respond in kind, as in the case of Amalek. When the Goyim use surface friendship like Midyan did we need to remember and maintain our distance.

**לְפֻוָּ֕ה מִשְׁפַּ֖חַת הַפּוּנִֽי To Puvah the family of Puni (26:23) - Baal Haturim** notes his family should have been called Puvee not Puni. Puni though, contains the message that everyone turned to him to learn Torah. **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** noted that the Torah was not merely telling us who had children and what the family was about. Rather, the Torah wants us to know that with Hashem’s involvement (the Yud and the Heh) there is a message and role for each of the families enumerated here. For Puvah it was in his scholarship.

**וַתִּקְרַ֜בְנָה בְּנ֣וֹת צְלָפְחָ֗ד The daughters of Tzlofchad came close (27:1)** - The Midrash notes that the story of the women is written near the death of the Dor HaMidbar to show that the women were more protective of their beliefs than the men. **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl.** explains that this was a direct result of the leadership of their leader -- Miriam. While Moshe and Aharon had connections with the people, the people looked up to them. Miriam sang WITH the women and danced WITH them. She led by example WITH her charges and they learned to guard their commitment with hers.

**וַֽעֲשִׂיתֶ֨ם עֹלָ֜ה And you shall MAKE an Olah to Hashem (29:2)** - The Yirushalmi (RH 4:8) notes that while the Torah uses the word V’Hikravtem everywhere else, when it comes to Rosh HaShana we say Va’Aseesem. It tells us that when you come to Din on Rosh Hashana and depart successfully, Hashem treats it as if you became a new creation. **Rav Nosson Wachtfogel** ztl. wondered how this was possible? He explains that man has the right to choose his trajectory for life and on Rosh Hashana, that is the day that the person makes his choice apparent. Hence, the word VaAseesem -- on this day you actualize your choice and make yourself and your destiny.

**מִלְּבַד֩ עֹלַ֨ת הַחֹ֜דֶשׁ Aside from the Olas HaChodesh and its Mincha (29:6) - Rav Schachter Shlita** would regularly remind us that Rosh Hashana is different from other things that coincide with different events. Rosh Chodesh can combine with Shabbos and there is no debate as to whether both Kedushos can be expressed. Rosh Hashana can fall on Shabbos and there is no doubt that neither outshines the other. So why does it happen when Rosh Hashana and Rosh Chodesh collide? Why does Rosh Hashana outshine Rosh Chodesh? Rav Schachter explained that since it is impossible for Rosh Hashana to exist without Rosh Chodesh (it is, after all the Rosh Chodesh of Tishrei) the Kedusha of the day must come from the same essence, as a result one MUST be subsumed by the other and therefore, both do not need mention directly, the Kedusha is naturally assumed.

**Haftara: בְּאֶ֖רֶץ לֹ֥א זְרוּעָֽה In a land that is not planted (Yirmiyahu 2:2)** - The **Likuttei Torah** suggests that the Possuk highlights a place where “Lo” is implanted. **Rav Zevin ztl.** explained that there are 2 ways to understand why we are told “no” in the Torah. First, we understand that the concept of “no” insofar as it changes us by implanting us with a sense of Kedusha. At the same time, “no” tells us that something more Kadosh has a greater potential of faltering when confronted with sin. Sin stains something clean much more than it stains something already filthy. Lo makes an impression on us because we are already imprinted with an eye toward the cleanliness of Kedusha.