

Behaloscha

May 28-29, 2021
17-18 Sivan 5781

This week's parsha is Behaloscha, that is the commandment to kindle the menorah in the Mishkan, and subsequently in the beis hamikdash.

The parsha is filled with many topics. The first, as mentioned the lighting of the menorah. Rashi explains that Ahron felt bad that the Leviim didn't partake in the inauguration of the mishkan, which is why this parsha starts with the 'eternal' service of lighting the candles. It is a reference as well to the future, when all people will light candles as well. There is a halachik element to the wording of the Torah, in regard to how one has to light the candles.

The subsequent topics are repeated in a similar fashion which is "Hashem spoke to Moshe saying", that although many of the topics had been stated prior, they are repeated for their halachik discourse, as now the Jews are actually consecrating the mishkan (it is their second year). The posuk states in Chapter 8 verse 24 that the leviim start working at 25. This contradicts the previous stated (Rashi in Bamidbar on the ages of counting and Parshas Naso) 30-50 age of service. Rashi explains this is the time period for learning. The Levi had to get trained and study for 5 years prior to their entry into the service.

The next topic Chapter 9 verse 10, is regarding impurity through corpse. A point to highlight is the choice of words. Rashi tells us that the impurity is a corpse related one. But the torah says if you will become tamei for a soul. Perhaps this is chosen language, as the beginning of Maseches Pesachim tells us, which is the proper choice of words. The Torah doesn't refer to negative things such as death (Life of Yakov, life of Sarah-when stating their passing). Rather the positive wording. There is a dot on the word Rechoka, and rashi explains this is due to the fact the one ought not take the word distance literally, rather, they are not near the place of the korban. (Every Jew had the obligation to be in the temple for the Passover and other sacrifices, unless they were exempt halachikally). The torah has to tell us not to take this literally, because in the desert, distance for the Korbanot wasn't a problem there was an encampment, the nation was all together, there was not "travel" per se to get to the temple. So, it refers to the later date when the temple will be built, and this will apply.

The next section discusses the horns and trumpets used in the service. As well something fascinating is the notes, and how they are played, that is the sounds to emit from them. See Rashis.

Chapter 10 verse 29 tells us of the departure of Moshe's father-in-law Yisro. He is called here something else compared to when we meet him back in Parshas Yisro. I spoke about the title then, now he is called Chovav, which is lashon of Chiba, love,

that he loved the Torah (Rashi) and he was loved by the Jews. As well, he is referred to as a midianite, and the father-in-law of Moshe, as opposed to the previous title of Priest of the land of Midian.

Chapter 10 verse 35 is the famous and important prayer of "Vayehi Binsoa Ahron" ... The two upside down nuns are to tell us that this phrase was not to be in this spot, rather, they were added to separate between the trials pre and post this phrase.

The Gemara in Shabbos 115b and 116a explains the different opinions of this stand-alone phrase. According to Rebbe this was supposed to be a standalone book, rendering according to some opinions 6 books of Torah or 7. Which is Bereishis, Shemos Vayikra, First half of Bamidbar, this Portion, then second half of Bamidbar, and Devarim.

Based on what the phrase means, and the opinions of the gemara, and Rashi, this statement is to provide tranquility to the uneasiness due to the sins of the Jews. But in my opinion, it has a messianic taste to it. Because it is in line with the opinion of Mashiach being a time of tranquility and conquering of the evil inclination (and in other ways as well).

The next part of the parsha is about the unfounded complaints of the Jews seeking food. Some say it relates to the new restrictions on the Jews and the laws they now had to abide by. Then there were false prophets, and other interesting narratives described (such as the Cushite woman).

We also have the tragedy of the Slav, which are the quails- sent by Hashem to punish those who asked for meat, because they felt the Manna wasn't enough¹. Slav shares the same lettering as the word Shalvei, which means tranquil. We see this in tehillim chapter 73 posuk 12. David Hamelech in that chapter is telling us about the seeming iniquity of evil people receiving benefits and material wealth in this world. The posuk 12 tells us

הַנֶּחֱלָאֵה רָשָׁעִים וְשִׁלְחֵי עֹלָם הַשְׁגֹּרֶתֶיךָ
Such are the wicked; ever tranquil they amass wealth. There is a connection between the quail being the type of "meat" given to the Jews who asked, and the "tranquility" of evil doers. As well, quail, are a relatively peaceful bird, yet were the symbol of punishment for the Jews request for meat².

The parsha ends with Moshe asking for forgiveness, and Miriam's tzaras affliction. Which contravenes the beginning of the Parsha about the menorah, when we are to be a shining light unto the nation.

One final note, this parsha is the 32nd of the Torah, which makes it the "Lev" of the Torah. This I believe connects to the phrase of Vayehi Binsoa, and its Messianic underpinnings.

May we be protected by Hashem and conquer the evil ways in order to welcome Mashiach now. Good Shabbos

¹ There is an element, of when someone is unchallenged, and has everything handed to them, it removes the enjoyment. The method of complaining, and what was being complained about was the mistake, rather the complaint and challenges ought to be on the activities of humans that are restricted due to the Torah. For example, the complaint of the cucumbers etc. were a euphemism according to some mepharshim of the sexual improprieties that the pre-Torah people could engage in and now couldn't, due to the Torah's laws.

² There is a connection between the duality of "things" in this world. According to chassidus, most elements of this world have the power to do good or bad. Same as us Jews, we either can "do good" or "do bad"; we have a yetzer tov and yetzer hara. The quail's tranquility can either be seen as positive, or negative. Or, furthermore, a part of people's pursuit-tranquility in this life, whereas David Hamelech is telling us, this is a façade...