

Parshas Naso

eLeviim, and teaching laws, and korbanos. The medrish tells us that the long parsha follows Shavuot, to show that we are spending time learning a long parsha as a reflection of our love of Torah.

The parsha tells us about different laws such as an impure person needing to quarantine. I think this is said right after the census to tell us that if a person has an impurity, we cannot judge them as not being part of the tribe. It was readily apparent during the pandemic that people will judge each other for catching a virus that is inevitable to catch, being reckless isn't the question, it is catching it all together...this lesson is clear to me from the Torah, that even a quarantined person shares in the census of the Jews- even if temporarily they are on the "outs".

After this law we learn about the Isha Sota- the suspected adulterers who are punished. But because there are no witnesses, the criminals must drink a special concoction to highlight their guilt and punishment, or innocence and reward. The Torah concludes this section about the laws of "jealousness", that is jealousy is a key source it seems for this type of wrongdoing.

The next law connects with the issue of sotah, which is becoming a Nazir- the status of abstaining from wine and other pleasures, as a service to Hashem, which concludes with the "chatas" sacrifice. Although wine can lead to jealousy and acts of impropriety, the counter to that could be abstinence, but this is not necessarily what is desired of us. Rather we are meant to conquer over our impulses and live a balanced life according to the Torah. This extreme is juxtaposed with these two states of being. And in fact, we see

this in this week's Haftora. Manoach's wife was suspected of impropriety, but was innocent, and resulted in the birth of Shimshon- as Nazir.

After the chapter on Nazir, the famous bracha of "Yivarechecha" is given to us. Rashi explains that the Cohen must not be distracted. I think this blessing is also stated next to results of jealousy to say that blessings must come with a clean heart, and without schadenfreude, and or judgment on what a person has and doesn't have. The blessings from Hashem are available to be given.

The next part of the parsha talks about the inauguration of the Mishkan. Rashi says on "Milea Kitores (7:20) that Ketores with At Bash Gar is the same numerical value as 613. Rashi tells us this likely to point out that keeping the 613 commandments is a sweet smell (incense) to Hashem. Chassidus explains this to mean that Mitzvos (including limud hatorah) piques Hashem's interest in a level of Ta'anug- pleasure, which is the place smell stimulates. The Lubavitcher Rebbe often explains this to us in Ma'amarim where he delineates between mitvos and limud hatorah alone. Meaning our purpose is to do as many mitzvos as possible- because the pleasure Hashem derives from this is higher than even Chochma, i.e., the highest of all the ten sefiros.

What I think we can see from the parsha is that there are dualities in the world Hashem created, and in the week following Shavuot, we can tap into the positive side of the duality. That is draw and empower us from conquering our impulses and using our tools on this earth for doing mitzvos which gives Hashem ultimate pleasure.

Good Shabbos.