

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 33

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NASSO

12th Sivan 5775

Kohen - First Aliya: Chapter 4, verses 21 – 37 and

Levi - Second Aliya: Chapter 4, verses 38 - 49

- ✚ Hashem asks Moshe and Aaron to Count all the males of the Levi'im families of Gershon and Merari who were between the ages of thirty and fifty years old.
- ✚ As this was the time frame a Levite was allowed to work in the Mishkan, the torah next describes the duties and roles each family has to carry out.
- ✚ The total number of Levi'im who were eligible to work added up to 8,580

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya: Chapter 5, verses 1 - 10

- ✚ As not to contaminate the place in which Hashem's shekinah (divine presence) is residing, Hashem explains the importance of purity within the camps and orders him to expel anyone who has either been infected with Tzara'at, (a supernatural disease which looks very similar to leprosy), a Zav (a person whose been diagnosed with either a sexual disease or an unnatural seminal discharge) or has been in contact with a human corpse in order to keep the camp Tahor (Pure).
- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe that if a thief has denied and lied under oath regarding his / her crime. They have committed treason against Hashem. In order to be forgiven the thief has to confess to his / her guilt and return back what was stolen plus an additional one-fifth of the value of what was taken.

R'VI'I - Fourth Aliya: Chapter 5, verses 11 - 27

- ✚ Hashem teaches Moshe the laws regarding a Sota (A wife who has been seen by witnesses, willingly going with another man into a secluded place) If the Husband has previously warned his wife not to do such a thing and becomes jealous, plus the witnesses can't testify what happened next; The Husband has to take his wife to a Kohen along with Korban of barley flour.
- ✚ The Kohen escorts the wife into the Mishkan, and prepares what is known as the 'bitter waters'. He then uncovers the woman's hair and places the jealous husband's Korban into her hands. The woman has to swear that she will accept the consequences of whatever happens to her.
- ✚ The Kohen explains to her that if she is guilty of having intimate relations with the other man then she will be cursed. He then writes the curse onto a piece of parchment and erases the letters in the water mixture and makes her drink. If she had been unfaithful to her husband the curse will come to fruition. If however she is innocent. She will be blessed with bearing a child.
- ✚ Hashem next tells Moshe the laws regarding someone who proclaims they want to be a Nazir (A person who makes a vow in order to be closer to Hashem. Firstly a Nazir must not cut his hair, Secondly they must refrain from drinking wine and thirdly they must come near a human corpse).
- ✚ Upon concluding their allotted time of being a Nazir, they must then offer up both a sin and a peace offering to Hashem, shave their hair and throw it into the flames.
- ✚ Hashem recites to Moshe and Aaron three beracha's which the Kohanim must bless the rest of Bnai Yisrael with. 1/ May Hashem bless and safeguard you. 2/ May Hashem shine his face and be gracious unto you. 3/ May Hashem turn his face to you and establish peace for you.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya: Chapter 6, verse 1 – 41,

Shishi - Sixth Aliya: Chapter 6, verses 42 – 71 and

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya: Chapter 6, verses 72 - 89

- ✚ On the day the Mishkan was erected, the princes of each tribe brought and presented korbanos before Hashem. Over the course of the next twelve days, one prince each day offered up their korbanos. All the korbanos were identical.
- ✚ Moshe enters the Mishkan and hears Hashem's voice speaking to him from the top of the ark cover between the two cherubim.

Haftorah – Shoftim (Judges), Chapter 13, Verses 2 - 25

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Manoah and his wife, who belonged to the Tribe of Dan, were childless. One day an angel appeared to Manoah's wife, informing her that she will give birth to a child. This child, the angel instructed, was to be a lifetime Nazirite.
- ✚ In addition, the angel instructed her from the moment of her conception, she must abstain from drinking wine and all foods forbidden to a nazirite. The angel further informed Manoah's wife that her son will save the Jewish people from the Philistine oppression they were enduring at that time.
- ✚ Upon hearing the good news that they were going to be blessed with a son, Manoah and his wife then invited the messenger to partake of a special meal they would prepare, but he declined. Instead the angel encouraged Manoah to offer the goat he wished to slaughter for the meal as a sacrifice to Hashem. The angel then ascended to the heavens in the flame that devoured the sacrifice.
- ✚ The Haftorah ends with the birth of Samson and that Hashem blessed him.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ This week's Sedra discusses all the Laws regarding a Nazirite.
- ✚ The Haftorah describes the birth of the most well-known one Shimson (Samson), who was Nazir throughout his whole life.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

In Parsha Nasso we are introduced to a new type of individual, a person who is not satisfied with the 613 mitzvors Hashem commanded us to follow but wishes to further their limitations by becoming a Nazir.

Every time I read this passage, I seem to get mixed messages. On the one hand, becoming a Nazir seems very commendable because you are showing your devotion to Hashem by wanting to become more holy; and yet on the other hand the torah seems to teach that this approach although acceptable is the wrong one to take, because at the end of their term as a nazirite a sin offering had to be brought to the Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash as a form of atonement for being one.

Commentary on these verses, observes that the holiness which the Nazir accepts is reminiscent of a Kohen Abstaining from wine during active duty, for example. However the restrictions imposed once you become a Nazirite are more severe than a Kohen. For instance a Kohen (apart from the Kohen Gadol himself) is permitted to defile himself if a member of their immediate family had passed away, whereas the Nazir is prohibited from doing so even in those circumstances. Why?

A regular Kohen achieves his holiness from his bloodline; had his father not been a Kohen neither would he. However the status of a Nazir is not an automatic result of their bloodline but is bound by proclaiming a vow instead; thereby achieving a higher level of holiness due to external factors they have chosen for themselves; So once an oath has been made, they have accepted on themselves a higher level of Kedusha (holiness), meaning the Nazir must not go back on his word. Even honouring their own parents would be prohibited if they unfortunately passed away during that period, as a Nazirite are not allowed to defile oneself for even for one's immediate family.

Certainly the goal of holiness is cherished by Hashem and the Nazir's inherent nobility should be applauded on consciously turning their backs on the madness of the world but in reality they are fundamentally flawed. Abstaining from wine was not the way Hashem wanted us to live. Wine is central to nearly every joyous event in our Jewish way of life, making Kiddush on a Shabbat or Yom Tov, having a L'Chaim over a bris, bat/bar-mitzvah or a marriage for example. These are all ways we can make ourselves more holy within the confines of Hashem's 613 mitzvors without imposing more restrictions upon oneself. A Nazir is essentially going against, who we are and what Hashem expects from each and every one of us. This is the reason why I believe a Nazir is punished by having to bring a Korban because they are not experiencing and embracing life in the way Hashem intended.

