

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 36

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NASSO

12th Sivan 5776

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.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO THE SEDRA:

- ✚ In total, there are fifteen words in Birkat Kohanim (The priestly blessings). The last word 'Shalom' meaning peace comes after the other fourteen words.
- ✚ The gematria of the word 'Y'ad' (hand) is fourteen. This is why it is customary and polite when greeting someone to shake them by the hand and say 'Shalom'.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Dotted throughout the Torah, there are a number times when benedictions and blessings have been given in order to administer encouragement and divine assistance to the recipient. Even though this particular blessing was transmitted by Aron the Kohen Gadol, for me the Priestly benedictions are the one that stands out. This is because it was not initiated by a father's devotion to his children like the blessings given by Yitzchak and Yaacov to their siblings but by Hashem himself.

As I read through and study the blessings the first thing I come to realise is that they are based on our continued covenant relationship, love and devotion we have with the almighty and Hashem is reciprocating in return.

To get a better understanding of the context and divine meaning of the benedictions themselves, we need to take a journey through the Torah up to this point in the book of Bamidbar. Bnai Yisrael had left Mitzraim in the most miraculous fashion known to man, where they had been enslaved for 400 years. Guided through the Yam Suf (Red / Reed Sea), survived further attacks from their enemies, whilst on their way to Mount Sinai. Upon arrival they once again were witness to another array of miraculous events, culminating with receiving the Torah directly from Hashem himself, marking the time for them to finally conquer and enter the Promised Land for good.

Unfortunately, as we know, this last part did not occur right away. Although neither Moshe nor Bnai Yisrael had any idea at that time or realized how quickly their situation was going to change in the imminent future. Hashem foresaw and had the insight that they were going to be soon going to be in desperate need, (because of the Heter Eigel / sin of the golden calf) having to spend the next 38 years traipsing around through the barren desert before advancing towards the land of Israel.

Hashem was mindful that his beloved nation would need provisions, water, insurance that no harm will come to them, and that they will never have to feel abandoned or neglected because His divine presence would never leave them and that they were going to need a blessing to assist and protect them throughout their ordeal.

I believe the priestly blessings themselves are not just a series of petitions but a comforting, self-assuring constant reminder that Hashem is totally devoted to us. He will always put us first and looks after our wellbeing. He is mindful of our needs even before we do and that no matter the circumstances we might find ourselves in. Hashem will find favour and would minister to our needs individually or as a whole nation in order to maintain our survival.

