

## פרשת נשא

Perhaps it is because of the timing, but there is no way to avoid the impression. The impression is that there is a small section in our Parshas Noso which seems to stand in glaring opposition to one of the central messages of the Yom Tov of Shavuos, a message that is often repeated throughout the year and throughout the years.

Parshas Noso is always read in proximity to the Yom Tov of Shavuos. In most years it is the Torah reading of the week immediately following that Yom Tov. And that is the fact this year, 5779 in the Golah.

Sometimes, and that is the fact this year in Eretz Yisroel, it is read on the Shabbos prior to Shavuos. And since it will be read here just hours before the onset of Shavuos, the impact is hard to ignore.

On Shavuos we will read the section of *Mattan Torah* in Parshas Yisro and the oft-quoted verses (Sh'mos Perek 19/P'sukim 1-2):

בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּאוּ מִדְבַר סִינַי: וַיִּסְעוּ  
מִרְפִּידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְבַר סִינַי וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיַּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגְדַת הָהָר:

On the third month from the Exodus of B'nei Yisroel from the Land of Egypt, on this day they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. They travelled from *Refidim* and they came to the Wilderness of Sinai and they camped in the wilderness and Israel camped there opposite the mountain.

Rashi writes:

ביום הזה - בראש חודש לא היה צריך לכתוב אלא ביום ההוא, מהו ביום הזה, שיהיו דברי תורה חדשים עליך כאלו היום נתנו:

*On this day* - it was Rosh Chodesh [Sivan]. It was only necessary to write 'on *that* day'. What does it mean by writing 'on *this* day'? It means to say that the words of the Torah should be new to you as if they were given today.

ויסעו מרפידיים - למה הוצרך לחזור ולפרש מהיכן נסעו, והלא כבר כתב שברפידיים היו חונים, בידוע שמשם נסעו, אלא להקיש נסיעתן מרפידיים לביאתן למדבר סיני, מה ביאתן למדבר סיני בתשובה אף נסיעתן מרפידיים בתשובה:



*When Moshe raised his hand, Israel overcame etc.* - Did the hands of Moshe win the war or did the hands of Moshe lose the war? Rather, it is to tell you that [when Moshe raised his hands and Israel looked above] when Israel looked above they would subjugate their heart to their Father in Heaven and they would overcome. If not, they fell.

Israel was successful in that war as we read there (Posuk 13):

וַיַּחֲלֹשׁ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת עַמְלִיק וְאֶת עֲמוּ לְפִי חָרָב:

Yehoshua weakened Amalek and his nation by the sword.

Since Israel overcame Amalek that means that they did 'subjugate their heart to their Father in Heaven' and that is the repentance about which Rashi writes.

On the other hand, when we see the Rashi that follows, the 'famous' Rashi, we will see how tenuous that *teshuva* was.

We note that in the two verses from Parshas Yisro that we brought above there were five verbs. All five verbs are descriptive of Israel. Four of those verbs are written in the plural and one is in the singular and that is the basis of the following Rashi there.

ויחן שם ישראל - כאיש אחד בלב אחד, אבל שאר כל החניות בתרעומת  
ובמחלוקת:

*Israel encamped there* - Like one person with one heart. But, all the other encampments were marked by anger and dispute.

The singular form of ויחן contrasts sharply with the ויחנו and other verbs in the plural form that we see in these verses.

And thus, the praiseworthy unity of Israel is given expression in this clear digression from the verb forms used until that point.

And what then is jarring in our Parshas Noso?

We read (B'midbar Perek 5/P'sukim 1-4):

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: צוֹ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה כָּל צָרוּעַ וְכָל זָב וְכָל טִמְא לְנַפְשׁ: מִזְכָּר עַד נִקְבָּה תִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה תִּשְׁלְחוּם וְלֹא יִטְמְאוּ אֶת

מַחֲנִיֵּהֶם אֲשֶׁר אָנִי שֹׁכֵן בְּתוֹכְכֶם: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֵן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אוֹתָם אֶל מְחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה  
כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשׂוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Hashem spoke to Moshe saying. Command B'nei Yisroel and they should send out from the camp<sup>3</sup> anyone who is a Halachic-leper and any zov-male with an impure bodily flow and anyone who is impure from contact with the dead<sup>4</sup>. Man and woman you shall send out to outside the camp you should sent them; they should not defile their camps that I Hashem dwell in them. B'nei Yisroel did so and they sent them out to outside the camp like Hashem commanded Moshe so did B'nei Yisroel do.

Rashi writes:

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<sup>3</sup> The Gemaras that are cited here teach that the three types of impurity listed here are inclusive of sub-categories and thus additional טמאים, impure individuals, men and women, are sent out as well from the various locations.

<sup>4</sup> In fact, the Halachah distinguishes between various types of *tum'a* in various Halachic categories.

Even though we are [correctly] accustomed to thinking that *tum'as ha'meis* – the impurity that comes about through the contact with a dead body is the most severe of all impurities, such is not always the case.

Impurities that are considered to be טומאה היוצאת מן הגוף, *impurity that exudes from the body*, have situations in which their Halachos are stricter than those of *tum'as ha'meis*.

The most famous example of the extra strictness, in certain circumstances, regarding טומאה היוצאת מן הגוף is in regard to Korban Pesach and Korban Pesach Sheini.

An individual who is impure for any reason cannot bring the Korban Pesach and must bring the Korban Pesach Sheini if they have become *tahor* in the intervening month.

However, there is a concept of טומאה הותרה בציבור. When most of Israel is impure, then the impurity does not prevent bringing *korbans*, and in our case, the Korban Pesach.

That is, if the majority of Israel is *tomei* they bring a Korban Pesach and do not bring a *Korban Pesach Sheini*.

However this concept of טומאה הותרה בציבור is applicable only when the impurity comes about from contact with the dead. If the impurity is from that which is produced by the body, even if all of Israel had contracted such an impurity, they are ineligible to bring the Korban Pesach and are pushed off to Pesach Sheini, one month later.

צו את בני ישראל וגו' - פרשה זו נאמרה ביום שהוקם המשכן...כדאיתא במסכת גיטין בפרק הניזקין (ס א):

*Command B'nei Yisroel* - This section was said on the day that the Mishkan was erected [the first of Nissan at the beginning of the second year following the Exodus]. This is found in Masseches Gittin in *Perek HaNizakin*.

וישלחו מן המחנה - שלש מחנות היו שם בשעת חנייתן, תוך הקלעים היא מחנה שכינה, חניית הלויים סביב כמו שמפורש בפרשת במדבר סיני היא מחנה לוייה, ומשם ועד סוף מחנה הדגלים לכל ארבע הרוחות היא מחנה ישראל. הצרוע נשתלח חוץ לכולן, הזב מותר במחנה ישראל ומשולח מן השתים, וטמא לנפש מותר אף בשל לוייה ואינו משולח אלא משל שכינה, וכל זה דרשו רבותינו מן המקראות במסכת פסחים (זו):

*They should send from the camp* - there were three camps of Israel when they encamped. Within the curtains [surrounding the Mishkan] was *Machaneh Shechinah* - The Camp of the Divine Presence. The Levi'im encamped around the Mishkan as is stated explicitly in Parshas B'midbar and it was called *Machaneh Leviya*. The area from Machaneh Leviya until the end of the encampment of all the tribes, with their distinctive flags and in all four directions, is called *Machaneh Yisroel*.

The Halachic-leper is sent outside all these three camps. The *zov* - with the impure bodily flow is permitted in *Machaneh Yisroel* but is sent out of the other two camps. The one who is impure because of contact with the dead is permitted even in *Machaneh Leviya* and is only sent out from *Machaneh Shechinah*. All this is what Chazal interpreted from the verses in Masseches Pesachim<sup>5</sup>.

If the ideal is *שם ישראל*, unity in encampment, how do we understand the Torah's direct command to remove individuals from *Machaneh Yisroel*, partially and even entirely?

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<sup>5</sup> See the Netziv here who suggests that at the time of the Torah, in the Midbar, all of those listed above were banished from even *Machaneh Yisroel*. That was the Mitzvah לשעה, for the limited era of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai.

After Israel entered Eretz Yisroel then the הלכה לדורות came into effect and the differentiated Halachos that Rashi writes came into force.

I do not know if any other authority holds such an opinion.

When these Mitzvos are annually juxtaposed with the Yom Tov of Shavuot it certainly focusses on questions that must be addressed.

Perhaps this paradoxical difficulty of praising unity and removing certain individuals from the group is implied by the Netziv on the verse:

צו את בני ישראל וישלחו מן המחנה כל צרוע וכל זב וכל טמא לנפש:

Command B'nei Yisroel and they should sent out from the camp anyone who is a Halachic-leper and any male with an impure bodily flow and anyone who is impure from contact with the dead.

The phrase

צו את בני ישראל

*Command B'nei Yisroel*

Is certainly not standard.

When G-d commands Moshe to transmit a Mitzvah to Israel He says: דבר אל בני ישראל, speak to B'nei Yisroel. Here He says tzav-command. What is the difference?

Netziv refers us to an earlier instance when a similar phrase was used and the interpretations that are suggested there.

There is a Parsha that takes its name from this unusual phrasing – Parshas Tzav in Sefer Vayikro.

We read there (Perek 6/Posuk 2):

צו את אהרן ואת בניו לאמר זאת תורת העולה הוא העולה על מוקדה על המזבח כל הלילה עד הבקר ואש המזבח תוקד בו:

[Moshe is told] Command Aharon and his sons saying: This is the law of the burnt-offering on the fire on the altar for the entire night until morning; the fire of the altar shall be ignited there.

Rashi writes:

צו את אהרן - אין צו אלא לשון זרוז מיד ולדורות. אמר רבי שמעון ביותר צריך הכתוב לזרז במקום שיש בו חסרון כיס:

*Command Aharon - Tzav* is an expression of acting quickly – this time and throughout the generations. Rabi Shimon said, ‘In particular it is necessary for the Torah to emphasize alacrity when a financial loss is involved.’

Sifsei Chachamim tells why *tzav*, which literally means ‘command’, also implies acting quickly. He writes here:

מדכתיב (דברים ג/כח<sup>6</sup>) צו את יהושע וחזקה ואמצהו זה זירוז

We learn this from what is written, ‘Command Yehoshua, strengthen him and give him courage’ – that is a command for alacrity.

That is, an action that requires courage for its undertaking must be one about which a person is hesitant, for whatever reason. Yehoshua was to be told that when such situations arise in which he may be hesitant to act, he must gird himself with courage and overcome his reluctance.

What monetary loss is there here to justify the comments of Rabi Shimon that Rashi quoted?

In his commentary *Divrei Dovid* on Rashi, *Taz* explains:

דכל הקרבנות יש בהם הנאה לכהנים במה שמגיע לחלקם מן הקרבן, אם כן בודאי יזדרז כל אחד שלא להתעצל בעבודה פן יקדמנו אחר, מה שאין כן בעולה שכולה כליל ואין לכהנים חלק בבשרה הוה אמינא שיתעצל בה, וזהו חסרון כיס לכהן של אותו משמר... על כן אמר כאן גבי עולה לשון זירוז.

All Korbonos bring benefit to the Kohanim since they receive a part of each offering and certainly, in general, Kohanim act quickly and are not lazy in their service in the Beis HaMikdosh.

The *oloh*-burnt offering is different than the other offerings because it is completely burnt and the Kohanim do not receive any part of it. It could be a concern that the Kohanim would be lazy because this is ‘a monetary loss to a Kohen’ [since they receive no portion] and thus they need the ‘push’ of

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<sup>6</sup> The entire verse reads:

וְצוֹ אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְחִזְקוּהוּ וְאַמְצוּהוּ כִּי הוּא יַעֲבֹר לְפָנַי הַעַם הַזֶּה וְהוּא יִנְחִיל אוֹתָם אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה:

Command Yehoshua, strengthen him and give him courage because he will go before this people and he will give them the inheritance of the Land that you shall see.

*tzav*. Therefore in the case of the burnt-offering the expression of *ziruz* is used.

So, Netziv explains, the use of the term *tzav* in our Parshas Noso has a similar meaning. It introduces the Mitzvah of banishing these various personages from different areas of B'nei Yisroel and since it was difficult to do so, it required encouragement to act speedily and without hesitation.

Perhaps our interpretation of the intent of the *Netziv* assuages our feeling somewhat when we are confronted with this contradiction between the ideal of Israel being one and the very Torah that idealizes that concept tells us that not everyone can stay within the camp. Perhaps we will better because the Torah implies that it is a challenge.

But we should not be assuaged. Because the issue is not completed with the few verses we have read here.

This section of banishing individuals from certain sections of the encampment is followed by the section of *Sotah*, the woman who has placed herself in a self-incriminating situation and therefore may cause her to be separated from her husband.

The section of *Sotah* is followed by the section of *nozir*. What is the first verse in that section? We read (Perek 7/P'sukim 1-2):

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה כִּי יִפְלֵא  
לְנֹדֵר נֹדֵר נָזִיר לְהִזִּיר לָהּ:

Hashem spoke to Moshe saying. Speak to B'nei Yisroel and you shall say to them, 'a man or a woman who wishes to vow a vow of *nozir* to be a *nozir* to Hashem.

The reader noted undoubtedly that we did not really translate the word יפליא. What does that term mean?

Rashi writes:

כי יפליא - יפריש.

*When he makes a neder* - the word יפליא means 'he will separate'.

נדר נזיר - אין נזירה בכל מקום אלא פרישה, אף כאן שפרש מן היין:

A vow of *nozir* – *Nazir* always means separation. That is what it means here as well –the *nozir* separated himself from drinking wine.

להזיר לה' - להבדיל עצמו מן היין לשם שמים:

To make a *neder* of *nozir* to Hashem – to separate himself from wine for the sake of heaven.

If we would now translate these words:

כִּי יִפְּלֵא לְנֹדֵר נֶזִיר לְהַזִּיר:

literally we would have something that reads:

'When he will separate to vow a vow of separation to separate'

*Nozir* is a theme of separation, not togetherness.

And Rambam concludes his *Hilchos Nezirus* (Perek 10/Halachah 14) by writing:

הַנּוֹדֵר לַה' דֶּרֶךְ קְדוּשָׁה הִרִי זֶה נָאָה וּמִשׁוּבַח וְעַל זֶה נֹאמֵר (שם ו/ז<sup>7</sup>) נִזְרָא...לִיקוּי עַל רֵאשׁוֹ קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לַה', וְשִׁקְלוֹ הַכְּתוּב כְּנִבְיָא שְׁנֹאמֵר (עֲמוּס ב/יא<sup>8</sup>) וְאִקִּים מִבְּנֵיכֶם לְנִבְיָאִים וּמִבְּחֹרִיכֶם לְנִזְרִיִּם.

One who takes a vow to Hashem in a path of sanctity – such is good and praiseworthy and about such a person it says, 'the crown of Hashem is upon his head; he is holy to G-d. And the Torah compares this type of a *Nozir* to a prophet as it says, 'I will establish from your sons prophets and from your lads *nezirim*.

Rambam praises the *nozir* whose status is such that he will even separate himself from his family and not attend the funeral of his parents.

We say that we cherish unity. We say that we want everyone to be together. We quote Hillel who taught (Masseches Ovos Perek 2/Mishnah 4):

<sup>7</sup> The entire verse reads:

לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ וּלְאָחִיו וּלְאָחֹתוֹ לֹא יִטְמָא לָהֶם בְּמֵתָם כִּי נִזְרָא...לִיקוּי עַל רֵאשׁוֹ:

For his father and for his mother and for his sister he cannot become *tomei* for them at their death because the crown of his G-d is upon his head.

<sup>8</sup> The entire verse reads:

וְאִקִּים מִבְּנֵיכֶם לְנִבְיָאִים וּמִבְּחֹרִיכֶם לְנִזְרִיִּם הָאֵף אֵין זֹאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹאם ה':

I Hashem will establish from your sons to be prophets and from your lads to be *nezirim* – isn't this B'nei Yisroel?', said Hashem.

## אל תפרוש מן הצבור

Do not separate yourself from the congregation.

Does our Parsha stand in opposition to all of this? The sending away of those defiled, the *Sotah* and the commended self-imposed and voluntary separation of the Nozir all seem to be opposed to the concept of unity.

However, when we look at our Parsha's beginning and its conclusion we have a picture that differs from the 'sending away', *Sotah* and Nozir of those middle sections. The portrait that Parshas Noso presents, continuing its theme from the beginning of Sefer B'midbar, is one of inclusion and not exclusion.

We learn of the institution of *Nesi'im* who represent the entirety of a particular Shevet and we learn of the roles of the various Levite families in constructing the Mishkan for all of Israel. Until we come to the P'sukim of sending out of the camp, the Torah is instructing us regarding how to build that camp in which all Israel resides.

And when we come to the final section of the Parsha, a section which is close to half of our Sedra based on its number of verses, we have a remarkable lesson in inclusion and unity.

Perhaps when we viewed the census of Parshas B'midbar and the appointment of individual *nesi'im* for each Shevet, one might have seen those events as being acts of separatism rather than events that serve to unify. If I give an individual identity to each *Shevet* am I not emphasizing their distinctiveness instead of that which they hold in common with others? Am I not focusing on the differences that exist rather than on their commonalities? Of course I am.

The response to such a comment is the final section of the Parsha in which each of the twelve *nesi'im* initiate their role in the dedication of the Mishkan beginning with the same first day of Nissan on which the Mitzvah of sending out the various *t'mei'im* was given.

We read (Perek 7/P'sukim 1-3):

וְיִהְיֶה בַּיּוֹם פְּלוֹת מִשָּׁה לְהִקְדִּים אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וַיִּמְשַׁח אֹתוֹ וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ אֹתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל כְּלָיו וְאֵת  
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֵת כָּל כְּלָיו וַיִּמְשְׁחֵם וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ אֹתָם: וַיִּקְרִיבוּ נְשִׂאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רֹאשֵׁי בֵּית אֲבֹתָם

הֵם וְנִשְׂאֵי הַמִּטֹּת הֵם הָעֹמְדִים עַל הַפְּקָדִים: וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת קַרְבָּנָם לִפְנֵי ה' שֵׁשׁ עֶגְלֹת  
צֶבַע וְשְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֵת בָּקָר עֶגְלָה עַל שְׁנֵי הַנְּשִׂאִים וְשׂוֹר לְאָחָד וַיִּקְרִיבוּ אוֹתָם לִפְנֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן:

It was on the day that Moshe completed erecting the Mishkan and he anointed it and he sanctified it and all of its vessels and the altar and all of its vessels and he anointed them and he sanctified them. The princes of Israel, the heads of their fathers' households, the heads of the tribes, the ones who stood [with Moshe] for the census. They brought their offerings before G-d: six covered wagons, and twelve cattle; one wagon from two *nesi'im* and an ox from each one and they offered them before the Mishkan.

There are two remarkable parts to the events that took place for the following twelve days, from the first of Nissan through the twelfth of Nissan of that year.

The first remarkable event is that each *Nosi* brought exactly the same offerings, item for item.

The second remarkable event is that the Torah writes what each *Nosi* brings, word for word, with the exact same *trop*, with the differences being only in the name of the individual *nosi* and his tribe. Certainly the Torah could have indicated in a far briefer way that they all brought identical offerings.

And these two remarkable events are completely intertwined. The only way to explain why the Torah repeats the same information twelve times is that the information is about an event that was truly.

Could there be anything more inclusive than that of twelve different personalities representing twelve different and distinct families doing exactly the same thing.

In these offerings there is no expression of distinctiveness or particularism though there were certainly distinctions and individualities. The Torah writes all of their offerings word for word to show that these great men, powerful leaders holding positions of influence and authority, put aside their justified distinctiveness and became אחד בלב אחד, like one man with one heart, reflecting the spirit of the encampment of Sinai.

And thus, we find paradoxical messages in our Parshas Noso. Are we promoting inclusivity or do we regale in exclusivity - removing from our midst those who we

feel do not belong to be part of us.

Although we will not pretend to be sufficiently competent in presenting a precise overview of appropriate inclusivity and exclusivity, we will begin our discussion noting the following Halachah that is relevant for the removal of those with various types of impurities from various locations within *Machaneh Yisroel*.

We learn in Masseches Taanis (21 b):

תנינא, רבי יוסי אומר: לא מקומו של אדם מכבדו, אלא אדם מכבד את מקומו. שכן מצינו בהר סיני שכל זמן שהשכינה שרויה עליו - אמרה תורה (שמות לד/ג<sup>9</sup>) גם הצאן והבקר אל ירעו אל מול ההר ההוא, נסתלקה שכינה ממנו - אמרה תורה (שם יט/יג<sup>10</sup>) במשך היבל המה יעלו בהר. וכן מצינו באהל מועד שבמדבר, שכל זמן שהוא נטוי אמרה תורה וישלחו מן המחנה כל צרוע. הוגללו הפרוכת - הותרו זבין והמצורעים ליכנס שם. אמר ליה:

We learned in a Braisa: Rabi Yose says, 'It is not the place that bestows honor upon a person; it is the person who bestows honor upon the place.

We find at Mt. Sinai that whenever the Shechinah was located above it, the Torah said, "Also the sheep and the cattle should not graze opposite that mountain." Once the Shechinah departed from the mountain, then the Torah said, "When the Shofar gives an extended sound, they can ascend upon the mountain."

And so we found regarding the *Ohel Moed* in the wilderness: as long as the *Ohel*-tent was erected, the Torah says, 'They shall send out the halachic-leper from the camp. When the flaps of the tent were rolled up in preparation for travel, all those impure people were allowed to enter *Machaneh Yisroel*.

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<sup>9</sup> The entire verse reads:

וְאִישׁ לֹא יַעֲלֶה עִמָּךְ וְגַם אִישׁ אֶל יָרֵא בְּכָל הָהָר גַּם הַצֹּאן וְהַבָּקָר אֶל יָרְעוּ אֶל מוֹל הָהָר הַהוּא:  
No person shall ascend with you and also no person shall be seen anyplace on the mountain; also the sheep and cattle shall not graze opposite that mountain.

<sup>10</sup> The entire verse reads:

לֹא תִגַּע בּוֹ יָד כִּי סָקוֹל יִסְקָל אוֹ יָרֵה יִירֶה אִם בְּהֵמָה אִם אִישׁ לֹא יִחִיָּה בְּמִשְׁךְ הַיָּבֵל הַמָּה יַעֲלוּ  
בְּהָר:

A hand should not touch it because he will be certainly stoned or cast off, whether an animal or a person – he will not live; when the Shofar sounds its extended sound they can ascend the mountain.

We are the determining factors; it is within us to give the appropriate honor to where we find ourselves, mindful of the quality of a particular place, and to know that at times our presence is not appropriate.

If we understand this Halachah correctly we may then wish to interpret the *Hashkafa* with which it provides us, together with the requisite obligatory behavior.

There are times when we possess greater sensitivity to holiness and purity. Those are times when HaKodosh Boruch Hu affords us a greater sense of His Presence. Two striking examples of those times are presented to us here.

One of those times was unique and never to be repeated; it was unparalleled. That time was *Mattan Torah* when even animals were not allowed to graze on the mountain above which the Shechinah hovered.

The other time extended most of the time in the Midbar and during the times when the Beis HaMikdosh was standing.

During the latter times there were gradations of the presence of the sanctity.

The Beis HaMikdosh itself was the *Machaneh HaShechinah* and *Har HaBayis* was *Machaneh Leviya* and Yerushalayim and other walled-cities were *Machaneh Yisroel*<sup>11</sup>.

In those times, various types of impurities interfered with the heightened presence of sanctity; those types of impurities did not belong together with the heightened presence of sanctity and thus needed to be separated so that the purpose of the presence of that heightened sanctity would not be defeated<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> See Masseches Kelim Perek 1 (Mishnayos 1-9) for a more detailed description of the עשר קדושות.

<sup>12</sup> We have noted earlier that different types of impurity are considered more severe in differing circumstances.

We know that some types of impurity are involuntary. The *tum'a* of the dead body is involuntary. The deceased did not willingly bring about that *tum'a*.

Bodily emissions can also be seen differentially. Some impurities that stem from them are dependent on voluntary behavior where as others are involuntary.

Although we can give special attention to the *Metzora* – the halachic-leper because his behavior that causes his total banishment as is explained in Chazal and in Rambam

Thus, it would seem to be fair to say that sanctity and impurity are mutually exclusive.

One may wish to oppose that hypothesis by bringing a well-known Halachah.

In Parshas Ki Siso the Torah presents us with the eleven elements that comprise the *ketores*-incense that was offered twice daily on the מזבח הזהב, the golden altar that was within the sanctuary of the Mishkan and Beis HaMikdosh. Those ingredients are written in that Parsha (Sh'mos Perek 30/Posuk 34).

One of those spices is named חלבנה and it was known for its foul odor and thus the question arises is why would such an ingredient be part of the *ketores* that is expected to provide a ריח ניחוח, a pleasant and pleasing fragrance.

Rashi writes there:

וחלבנה - בשם שריחו רע וקורין לו גלבנא, ומנאה הכתוב בין סמני הקטורת, ללמדנו, שלא יקל בעינינו לצרף עמנו באגודת תעניותינו ותפלותינו את פושעי ישראל שיהיו נמנין עמנו:

*Chelbonoh* – is a spice with a bad odor and it is called *galbanoh*. The Posuk lists it among the ingredients of the *Ketores* to teach us that a person should not think that it is unimportant to have sinners with us when we gather for our fast days and our prayers – they should be counted among us<sup>13</sup>.

We may immediately and correctly associate this *limmud* with the statement that the *Chazzan* makes right before the recitation of *Kol Nidrei* on Yom HaKippurim:

אנו מתירים להתפלל עם העבריינים

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and in many other places, we will not attempt to explain the Torah's *chukkim* of *tahara* and *tum'a* in this regard.

<sup>13</sup> Sifsei Chachamim here explains how we know that those sinners should be counted 'among' us. He writes:

דאם לא כן, לחשוב חלבנה בראש או בסוף ולא בתוכם:

If it would not be so that the *Chelbanah* should be *among* the other spices, it should have been written *Chelbanah* at the beginning of the verse or at its end. [Because if it was written at the beginning of the verse or at its end, I might have thought to offer it separately, not *among* the other ingredients.]

We allow the prayer with the sinners.<sup>14</sup>

Would this statement not seem to be the epitome of inclusivity and indicate that even those who are impure should be part of us and not sent away?

And, this is not a commentary about a general principle. This is a commentary that refers to the *Ketores*, an offering that has a unique place in Torah, sanctity and *Avodas Hashem*.

It was the *Ketores* that the angels presented to Moshe Rabbenu on Sinai in order to placate him after they opposed mankind receiving the Torah, as we read in Masseches Shabbos (89 a).

It was that gift of *Ketores* that subsequently saved our rebellious ancestors at the time of Korach as we read (B'midbar Perek 17/Posuk 12):

וַיִּקַּח אֶהָרֶן כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה וַיִּרְץ אֶל תּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל וְהִנֵּה הַחַיִּל הַנִּגְרָף בָּעַם וַיִּתֵּן אֶת הַקְּטֹרֶת וַיִּכְפֹּר עַל הָעָם:

Aharon took according to what Moshe told him and he ran into the midst of the congregation and behold the plague had started; he placed the *ketores* into the incense pan and he atoned for the people.

Furthermore, the uniqueness of the *Ketores* is underscored by the fact that since it was the only regularly brought offering upon the golden altar, that altar was termed *מזבח הזהב* in addition to being called *מזבח הקטורת*. This *Ketores*-Altar was positioned approximately in the middle of the *Heichal*, with the *Shulchan* to the north and the Menorah to the south. The *Ketores*-Altar was a central feature of the Beis HaMikdosh.

Thus, the sanctity of the *Ketores* is indisputable and it appears that not only was separation not requested, inclusionary measures were required.

Thus we need to see the commentary of *Gur Aryeh* on this Rashi, brought concisely by Sifsei Chachamim:

כדי שיראה השם יתברך שגם הפושעים חוזרים בתשובה וירחם עלינו:

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<sup>14</sup> In the context of Yom HaKippurim, this declaration reflects upon all of us as we note our inadequacies as we come before מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא on that holiest of days.

[We include the sinners to be participants with us in our prayers] so that G-d will see that even the sinners are repenting and He will have mercy upon us.

Do not think, says Maharal MiPrag, that there is any value in showcasing sinners while we strive to do *teshuva*. What value is there to publicizing sinners? Do we not know that it is a *chutzpa* to publicly broadcast our sins to G-d? The verse says (Tehillim 32/1):

לְדָוִד מִשְׁכֵּיל אֲשֶׁר־י נָשׂוּי פָּשַׁע כָּסוּי חֲטָאָה:

A psalm of Dovid: Happy is the one whose iniquity is forgiven, his sin covered<sup>15</sup>.

Thus, this requirement of having sinners join with us in our prayers is similar to the requirement of requiring *chelbanah* as an ingredient to the *Ketores*.

The mixture is a healthy one when the result of the totality will be a healthy and fragrant odor.

When utilized well, *chelbanah* will influence the entire mixture well.

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<sup>15</sup> Rambam writes in Hilchos Teshuva (Perek 2/Halachah 5):

ושבח גדול לשב שיתודה ברבים ויודיע פשעיו להם ומגלה עבירות שבינו לבין חבריו לאחרים ואומר להם אמנם חטאתי לפלוני ועשיתי לו כך וכך והריני היום שב ומתנחם, וכל המתגאה ואינו מודיע אלא מכסה פשעיו אין תשובתו גמורה שנאמר (משלי כח/יג) מכסה פשעיו לא יצליח, במה דברים אמורים בעבירות שבין אדם לחבירו אבל בעבירות שבין אדם למקום אינו צריך לפרסם עצמו ועזות פנים היא לו אם גילם, אלא שב לפני הא...ל ברוך הוא ופורט חטאיו לפניו ומתודה עליהם לפני רבים סתם וטובה היא לו שלא נתגלה עונו שנאמר אשרי נשוי פשע כסוי חטאה.

It is very praiseworthy for the penitent to confess his sin publicly and tell of his iniquities to the people and to reveal his interpersonal sins to others. He should say, 'In truth I have sinned to that person and I did this wrong to him and today I repent and regret. One who is prideful and does not let his sins be known but covers up his iniquities – his repentance is incomplete as it says, 'He who covers his sins will not succeed'.

When do we say the above? That is in regard to interpersonal sinning. However regarding sins between man and G-d, one need not publicize himself and it is brazen if he does reveal them. Rather a person should repent before G-d [alone] and specify his sins [only] before Him and confess them in public in a general way [only]. It is good that one should not reveal his sins that he committed against Hashem and about this the verse says: Happy is he whose iniquity is lifted, his sin covered.

When those who think of themselves as righteous see others whom they do not respect religiously turning to G-d with sincere fervor, they will be inspired to investigate themselves more scrupulously and themselves turn to G-d with a level of sincerity that they did not possess before.

Regarding the *Ketores'* power, with all of its ingredients compounded including *chelbanah*, we read in Masseches Tomid (Perek 3/Mishnah 8):

מיריחו היו מריחים ריח פטום הקטרת אמר רבי אליעזר בן דגלאי עזים היו  
לבית אבא בהר מכזור והיו מתעטשות מריח פטום הקטורת:

Even from Yericho [distant from Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdosh] they enjoyed the fragrance of the *ketores* mixture. Rabi Eliezer ben Diglai said, 'My father had goats on Mt. Mechvar and they would sneeze from the fragrance of the *ketores* mixture.

Those who are truly penitent, who see themselves as being unworthy, can inspire the rest of us so that the fragrance of our prayers can ascend before the *Kisei HaKavod*.

Thus, we have seen a number of subjects and sugyos that do not easily fit into one pattern.

There is a difference between when the sanctity is extant and when it isn't. When the Mishkan and Beis HaMikdosh are standing, the potentially pervasive holiness is thwarted when there is impurity in the air.

Does this mean, then, that since when the Mishkan was traveling and the sanctity was less prominent that there was no need for separation? Does this mean that nowadays, until the Beis HaMikdosh will be rebuilt, the concepts presented to us by the section of 'sending away' *t'mei'im* are not relevant?

The interpretation of Midrash (B'midbar Rabbah Parshata 7/10) on our Parsha, elucidated and expanded upon by *Kli Yokor*, will let us see the relevance of the section of banishing the impure to our day and age.

A section of that Midrash reads:

...כל צרוע וכל זב וכל טמא לנפש רמז להם שאם יעברו ישראל על שלש עבירות  
הללו עבודת כוכבים וגילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים יתחייבו גלות, צרוע זו עבודת  
כוכבים מה מצרוע מטמא בביאה אף עבודת כוכבים מטמא בביאה, זב זו גילוי

עריות שאלו ואלו מטמאין על ידי שכבת זרע, טמא לנפש אלו שופכי דמים שהן מטמאין עצמן ומטמאין הארץ בשפיכות דמים...

*Every halachic-leper, and every zov and every one impure from contact with a dead body* – this is a hint to Israel that if they will violate these three sins: idolatry, promiscuity and murder they will be culpable for the punishment of exile.

*Tzoru'a*- refers to idolatry. Just like leprosy defiles one who enters the house with a *Metzora* in it, so does one become defiled if he enters a house of idolatry.

*Zov* refers to promiscuity because the *zov* and promiscuous individuals become defiled with emissions.

*One who is impure from contact with the dead* – refers to murderers. They defile themselves with their contact with their victim and they defile the Land with their murderous acts.

The following are excerpts from *Kli Yokor*:

וישלחו מן המחנה כל צרוע וגו'. אחר שסידר כל שלוש מחנות...הזכיר מיד סדר קדושת שלוש מחנות אלו כי הצרוע משולח מן שלושתן, והזב חוץ לשנים, וטמא לנפש חוץ למחנה שכינה. וסדר שילוח זה מסכים לדברי המדרש האומר וישלחו מן המחנה כל צרוע זה עבודה זרה וכו'...ודרש כל פסוק זה על הגלויות...

*They should send out from the encampment any halachic-leper etc.* After the Torah told us about the arrangement of the three camps (*Shechina*, *Leviya*, *Yisroel*) it immediately mentions the order of the sanctity of these three camps. The Midrash interprets each referring to the exiles of Israel.

The *metzora* is sent out from all three and the *zov* from two and the one defiled from contact with the dead from *Machaneh Shechina*. This hierarchy is appropriate for the Midrash that says, 'they shall send out from the camp every *metzora*-this refers to idolatry, etc.

...ודאי...בתוכם בא להזהירם שלא יסבבו סילוק השכינה על ידי שלושה ראשי עבירות אלו המסבבים החורבן...אלו סימנים מובהקים על אשר בקרבם א[ם] שמץ מינות של עבודה זרה מזרקה בו...ועל עוון זה נחרב בית ראשון ושני כי אף על פי שלא עבדו עבודה זרה בבית שני מכל מקום היה בהם חטא שנאת חנם ולשון הרע

השקול כעבודה זרה...וכל זב...ושילוחו חוץ...[ש]כל מקום קדושה אינו סובל דבר  
ערוה...וכל טמא לנפש, כי זה מורה גם כן על רוח עושים אשר בקרבו ושאינו מקפיד  
להטמא בנפש אדם על ידי שפיכות דמים הנוגע בצלם א..."לקים...

Certainly these verses come to warn Israel not to cause the departure of the Shechinah because of these three cardinal sins. These cardinal sins are objective indications about what is within the nature of Israel. If a touch of disbelief or idolatry is within them – that is the sin for which the first and second Botei Mikdosh were destroyed. Even though there was no actual idolatry in the second Beis HaMikdosh, they sinned with *l'shon ho'ra'* which is equivalent to idolatry.

Zov – he is sent out because any place with sanctity cannot bear promiscuity.

'Those impure because of contact with the dead' – because that indicates a sinful spirit within them when a person is not hesitant to become defiled from a dead body that was murdered – a body that possessed *tzelem E... lokim*, the Divine Image.

ולפי ששלושה אלו גרמו החורבן וסילוק השכינה, על כן צוה לרחקם מן המחנה  
שלא יטמאו את מחניהם כי במקום שהמה מצוין הקדוש ברוך הוא מרחיק שכינתו  
משם כי המקום טמא טמא יקרא<sup>16</sup>.

Since these three cardinal sins caused the *Churban* and the departure of the Shechinah from the midst of Israel, G-d commanded to distance them from the encampment of Israel so that they should not defile their encampment. Wherever these sins are found, G-d distances His Shechinah from there because the place itself 'calls out impurity'.

רמז לדבר ט' מן טמא, רמז לשפיכות דמים הנולד לט' חודשים כי מטעם זה היו ערי  
מקלט...בין הכל ט' לא יותר...מ' מן טמא, רמז לגילוי עריות שכן היו מי המבול  
ארבעים יום על שהטריחו ליוצרים לצור צורת ממזרים בארבעים ימי יצירת הולד. א'  
מן טמא, רמז לעבודה זרה הנוגע באחדות ה' יתברך הרמוז באל"ף...

The word *tomei* itself, with its letters of *tes*, *mem* and *alef* hint at this. The letter ט-tes hints at the cardinal sin of murder when it kills someone born

<sup>16</sup> See Vayikro Perek 13/Posuk 45.

after 9 months. It is for that reason that there were precisely *nine* Cities of Refuge.

The letter *n-mem* from the word *tomei* hints at the cardinal sin of promiscuity because the flood waters were 40-*n* days upon the earth and because the people of that time 'troubled' their Creator as they formed the fetuses of illegitimate children at 40-*n* days after conception.

The letter *κ-alef* from the word *tomei* hints at idolatry that challenges the unity of the *κ-One* G-d Whose Name is hinted by the letter *alef*.

The Torah is teaching us that there are different levels of sensitivity that result in the fact that different people have different reactions to a lack of sanctity and to improprieties. Just like the encampment of Israel was holy in its entirety and at the same time had varying levels of sanctity, so those differences exist among individuals as well.

There are those behaviors and attitudes which are appropriate at any level of sanctity and there are those behaviors and attitudes which are inappropriate at every level of sanctity.

That framework that the Torah provides and was expanded upon by the Midrash with the help of *Kli Yokor* maps out those areas and provides us with general principles.

Anyone who can fit into any one of the three encampments is a bona fide participant in the activities of the Jewish People.

And the converse is also true. And that is the difficulty with the enactment of our Parsha as *Netziv* pointed out. There are challenges that are difficult to overcome and thus the Torah used the expression of *tzav* as an expression of an extra push to fulfill a challenging task.

Often today we hear discussion about Orthodoxy as being a 'big tent', meaning that it has room for differing practices among religious Jews and that we must be vigilant not 'to send people out of the camp'; we may not exclude.

That is true. As we complete *Sefiras Haomer* this week we are reminded that we began with the *middah* of *Chessed* which is expressed by love, kindness and inclusivity.

Only after we master *Chessed*, kindness, which in our context refers to *inclusivity*, can we proceed to the following attribute of *Gevurah* which, in our context here, would be expressed by exclusivity and separation.

Only one who has to be forced by the command of *tzav* to send someone away can make the other an 'outsider' because such a person truly regrets a situation that demands such action. Such a person is imbued with *chessed*.

A person without *chessed* cannot practice true *gevurah*. If there is no foundation of love then acts of harshness only reflect meanness of spirit. Meanness of spirit is far removed from spirituality.

At the same time as we talk about a 'big tent' we must remember that a tent must have flaps that are lowered, separating it from others.

That is the statement that we make when we begin our davening in the morning in Shul. We recite the Posuk from Parshas Bolok (B'midbar Perek 24/Posuk 5):

מָה טוֹבוֹ אֹהֲלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

How good are your tents, Yaakov, your dwelling places, Israel.

What made those tents 'good'?

Rashi writes:

מָה טוֹבוֹ אֹהֲלֶיךָ - עַל שֶׁרָאָה פִּתְחֵיהֶם שְׂאִינָן מִכּוּוֹנִין זֶה מִזֶּה:

*How good are your tents* – he saw that their openings were not directly opposite one another.

When we read:

וַיַּחַן יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹגַד הֶהָר-כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלִב אֶחָד

Israel encamped opposite the mountain like one man with one heart:

we need to remember that everyone then had their own home; everyone had their own privacy. Our ancestors decided when it was appropriate to open their home and when it was the right time for the door to be closed.

May we be protected from the disastrous error about which Chazal taught us in Midrash Koheles Rabba (Parshata 7/16):

מי שנעשה רחמן במקום אכזרי סוף שנעשה אכזרי במקום רחמן

One who becomes merciful when he should be cruel will, at the end, become cruel when he should be merciful.

May we emulate our ancestors correctly as we establish our encampments, personal and national, to reflect the *chessed* and *gevurah* that are foundational for the eternal sanctity of the unity that we wish to celebrate always.

Shabbat Shalom

Chag Sameach

Rabbi Pollock