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Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

It was the emotional low of Moses' life. After the drama at Sinai, the revelation, the golden calf, the forgiveness, the building of the Tabernacle and the book-length codes of purity and holiness, all the people can think about is food. "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost-also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (Num. 11:5-6). It was enough to make anyone despair, even a Moses.

But the words he speaks are shattering. He says to G-d: "Why have you brought this trouble on Your servant? What have I done to displease You that You put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land You promised on oath to their ancestors? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how You are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me-if I have found favor in Your eyes-and do not let me face my own ruin." (Num. 11:11-15)

These words deserve the closest attention. Inevitably our attention focuses on the last remark, Moses' wish to die. But actually this is not the most interesting part of his speech. Moses was not the only Jewish leader to pray to die. So did Elijah. So did Jeremiah. So did Jonah. Leadership is difficult; leadership of the Jewish people almost impossible. That is an old story and not an uplifting one.

The real interest lies elsewhere, when Moses says: "Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant?" But G-d never used those words. He never remotely implied such a thing. G-d asked Moses to lead but He did not tell him how to lead. He told Moses what to do, but He did not discuss his leadership style.

The man who gave Moses his first tutorial in leadership was his father-in-law Jethro, who warned him of the risk of the very burn-out he is now experiencing. "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (Ex. 18:17-18). He then told him to delegate and share his burden with a team of leaders, much as G-d is about to do in our parsha.

Interestingly, Moses' burn-out occurs immediately after we read, at the end of the previous chapter, of Jethro's departure. Something very similar happens later in parshat Chukkat (Num. 20). First we read of the death of Miriam. Then immediately there follows the scene at Merivah when the people ask for water and Moses loses his temper and strikes the rock, the act that costs him the chance to lead the people across the Jordan into the promised land. It seems that in their different ways, Jethro and Miriam were essential emotional supports for Moses. When they were there, he coped. When they were not, he lost his poise. Leaders need soul-mates, people who lift their spirits and give them the strength to carry on. No one can lead alone.

But to return to Moses' speech to G-d, the Torah may be hinting here that the way Moses conceived the role of leader was itself part of the problem. "Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant?" This is the language of the leader-as-parent, the "great man" theory of leadership.

Building on, and going beyond, the theories of Gustave le Bon and the "group mind," Sigmund Freud argued that crowds become dangerous when a certain kind of leader comes to power.

(See Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, and Moses and Monotheism, part III. See also Mark Edmundson, The Death of Sigmund Freud: the legacy of his last days (2007) who argues that this is why Freud spent the last year of his life writing the third part of Moses and Monotheism, as a warning of the danger of the craving for strong leadership.)

Such a leader, often highly charismatic, resolves the tensions within the group by seeming to promise solutions to all their problems. He is strong. He is persuasive. He is clear. He offers a simple analysis of why the people are suffering. He identifies enemies, focuses energies, and makes the people feel whole, complete, part of something great. "Leave it to me," he seems to say. "All you have to do is follow and obey."

Moses never was that kind of leader. He said of himself, "I am not a man of words." He was not particularly close to the people. Aaron was. Perhaps Miriam was also. Caleb had the power to calm the

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people, at least temporarily. Moses had neither the gift nor the desire to sway crowds, resolve complexity, attract a mass following or win popularity. That was not the kind of leader the Israelites needed, which is why G-d chose Moses, not a man seeking power but one with a burning sense of justice and a passion for liberty.

Moses, though, seems to have felt that the leader must do it all: he must be the people's father, mother and nurse-maid. He must be the doer, the problem-solver, omniscient and omnicompetent. If something needs to be done it is for the leader-turning to G-d and asking for His help-to do it.

The trouble is that if the leader is a parent, then the followers remain children. They are totally dependent on him. They do not develop skills of their own. They do not acquire a sense of responsibility or the self-confidence that comes from exercising it. So when Moses is not there-he has been up the mountain for a long time and we do not know what has happened to him- the people panic and make a golden calf. Which is why G-d tells Moses to gather a team of seventy leaders to share the burden with him. Don't even try to do it all yourself.

The "great man" theory of leadership haunts Jewish history like a recurring nightmare. In the days of Samuel the people believe all their problems will be solved if they appoint a king "like all the other nations." In vain, Samuel warns them that this will only make their problems worse. Saul looks the part, handsome, upright, "a head taller than anyone else" (1 Sam. 9), but he lacks strength of character. David commits adultery. Solomon, blessed with wisdom, is seduced by his wives into folly. The kingdom splits. Only a few subsequent kings are equal to the moral and spiritual challenge of combining faith in G-d with a politics of realism and civic virtue.

During the Second Temple period, the success of the Maccabees was dramatic but short-lived. The Hasmonean kings themselves became Hellenised. The office of High Priest became politicised. No one could contain the growing rifts within the nation. Having defeated the Greeks, the nation fell to the Romans. Sixty years later Rabbi Akiva identified Bar Kochba as another "great man" in the mould of Judah the Maccabee, and the result was the worst tragedy in Jewish history until the Holocaust.

Judaism is about diffused responsibility, making each individual count, building cohesive teams on the basis of a shared vision, educating people to their full potential, and valuing honest argument and the dignity of dissent. That is the kind of culture the rabbis inculcated during the centuries of dispersion. It is how the pioneers built the land and state of Israel in modern times. It is the vision Moses articulated in the last month of his life in the book of Devarim.

This calls for leaders who inspire others with their vision, delegating, empowering, guiding, encouraging and making space. That is what G-d was hinting to Moses when he told him to take seventy elders and let them stand with him in the tent of meeting, and "I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them" (Num. 11:16-17). G-d was telling Moses that great leaders do not create followers; they create leaders. They share their inspiration. They give of their spirit to others. They do not see the people they lead as children who need a father-mother-nursemaid, but as adults who need to be educated to take individual and collective responsibility for their own future.

People become what their leader gives them the space to become. When that space is large, they grow into greatness. *© 2012 Chief Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and torah.org*

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The Torah instructs Aharon and through him all of his successors, the High Priests of Israel that when lighting the great menorah one should make certain that the six outside lamps should all face into the center lamp. There are various opinions amongst the commentators as to how this was to be accomplished. The wicks were bent inwards or perhaps the lamps themselves were tilted towards the middle lamp - or it could have been that this was only one of the recurring miracles that defined the Mishkan and later the Temple in Jerusalem. These are just some of the ideas advanced to explain how this matter was in fact accomplished.

Be all of this as it may have been, the greater question obviously is what lesson is the Torah imparting to us by this instruction that the outside lamps should face the middle lamp. I think that the idea that the Torah wishes us to internalize is that the light of the holy menorah requires focus.

We know that in the physical world the more intense and concentrated the focus of the light, the greater is its ability illuminate and reveal. Diffused light creates mood and atmosphere but it does not really show what lies before us. The light of the menorah is symbolic of Torah in Jewish life. Torah, its study, support and observance, requires focus and concentration. It cannot serve its true purpose in our

lives when it exists amongst us only in a diffused and generalized sense.

Our rabbis taught us what the focus of Jewish life is and should be: Torah, G-dly service, human kindness and consideration for others. Other causes are only to be granted diffused light and they, by themselves, will not serve to erase the darkness of our existence and society. Every human life, every family, even every educational and commercial enterprise requires focus and concentration in order to be successful and productive.

We all have priorities in our lives. These priorities become the plans, actions and ideas that we focus our attention, talents and resources upon. Judaism demands that we focus upon love and study of Torah and its observances. We should concentrate upon our daily conversation, so too speak - our prayer services - with our Creator.

We are required to serve G-d and do His bidding. And that requires effort, sacrifice and devotion. It is perhaps the most challenging area of our religious life - and demands total focus and concentration And kindness towards others certainly requires focus. In theory, in a world of diffused light, we all subscribe to the notions of good behavior, social responsibility and charitable ideals. However when we are faced with the individual test of performing a specific human kindness to a specific human being we oftentimes shirk that responsibility.

Our focus is not present and thus we are prevented, not out of malice but simply out of lack of concentration and devotion, from performing the necessary act of kindness that lies before us. Thus the lesson of the menorah is one of focus - the focus that will allow the light of spirit and G-dliness to light our way through our lives.

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

The Jewish people seemed poised for entry into the Promised Land when suddenly, "The nation became a group of kvetchers, complaining evilly in the ears of the Lord.... saying 'who will feed us meat? Remember the fish which we ate in Egypt for free, the cucumbers, the watermelons, the onions and the garlic?'" (Numbers 11:1,4,5)

The degeneration continues, Moses cries out to G-d that he has no meat to give the nation and that he can no longer bear the burden of leading them. The Divine response is to tell Moses to gather seventy men from among the elders of Israel who will help bear the burden and upon whom the spirit of the Lord will rest (11:16,17).

Why are the Jews so vexed and unsettled, and how does G-d's response alleviate their feelings? They want meat and G-d tells Moses to give them 70 rabbis! After all of the miracles of the Exodus, it's difficult to understand the disillusionment of the Israelites and even more difficult to understand the solution offered by G-d.

I believe that the subtext of this trialogue between the Israelites, Moses and G-d is that Moses is now being confronted by a new generation, by the youth who left Egypt and are now maturing into adulthood. This new generation has different needs and expectations to their parents. Each generation requires its own teachers; each generation has its own dreams, needs and vision. The adults who left Egypt with Moses required a Rav; their children who were now growing to maturity required a Rebbe.

It has often been said that the difference between a Rav and a Rebbe is that when a Rav chastises, everyone thinks he is speaking to their neighbor, whereas when a Rebbe chastises everyone feels that he is speaking personally to them. I believe there is another difference which emanates from this one. A Rav speaks with the voice of tradition and conveys the words of G-d to the entire nation, giving a message which expresses the vision of our eternal Torah for all generations. A Rebbe speaks personally to every individual, taking the eternal message of G-d and making it relevant to their needs. The Rav speaks to the generation; the Rebbe speaks to the individual in each generation.

Moses was an exulted prophet who came to the Israelites from the faraway palace of Pharaoh. He continued to lead them from the Tent of the Divine Meeting three parasangs (about 10.5 miles) from the encampment of the Israelites. Moses did not speak to the Israelites with his own voice since "he was heavy of speech and of uncircumcised tongue." He thundered with the voice of G-d presenting the Divine message of freedom and responsibility. His power which emanated from the Divine enabled him to unite the nation and imbue them with the confidence to follow him and G-d into the barren desert. Moses came from the distance and looked out into the distance. He was a ro'eh(with an aleph); a lofty and majestic seer.

Now, that the Jews had collectively left the land of oppression, followed their seer into the desert and were about to begin a new life in the Promised Land, they had to put the general and elusive notion of national freedom into personal perspective. Each individual had to understand how to utilize the gift of freedom to find their individual purpose and their individual expression within the context of G-d's land and G-d's Torah. Each individual had to find their own instrument within the divine symphony orchestra. For this, they required an individual pastor (ro'eh with an ayen and not an aleph). They could not articulate this need because they didn't quite understand it. They

thought their discomfort stemmed from boredom with the uniform, daily manna. That's why they were not even sure which food they wanted; meat, watermelon, leeks or garlic. What they really needed was individual nourishment for their souls. At first, Moses too did not understand what they needed and so, when he sent out the scouts to tour the land and inspire the people with its bounty, he told them "strengthen yourselves and take the fruit of the land" and bring back luscious grapes.

Ultimately, Moses understands this new generation requires a personalized Rebbe rather than a G-d - imbued Rav. This was a trait which one as close to G-d as Moses did not have the wherewithal to develop. His closeness to G-d and eternity conflicted with their immediate individual needs. Moses recognizes that this new generation requires a new leader: "Let the Lord G-d of the differing spirits of the various flesh and blood human beings appoint a leader over the congregation, one who will take them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord not be like sheep without a shepherd." (Numbers 27:16).

Joshua was a very different type of leader to Moses, a great scholar and prophet, but also a man of the people. This made him the right person to bring this generation into the Promised Land. They had cried out for meat but what they really needed were rabbis: leaders, who would prophesy from within the encampment rather than from the distant Tent of Meeting where G-d resided. They needed a Rebbe.

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

Parashas Beha'alosecha has been correctly described as the turning point of not only Sefer Bamidbar, but of the nation's experiences in the desert (which covers the second half of Sefer Sh'mos, all of Sefer Vayikra, and most of Sefer Bamidbar). Everything had been in place for a triumphant entrance into the Holy Land; the Mishkan was built, the covenant between G-d and His people had been established, the arrangement of the camp was set, the mode of travel had been determined, and the system to communicate when it was time to travel or set up camp was in place. Had everything gone according to plan, the nation would have traveled to the border of the Promised Land and begun to conquer it (see Rashi on Bamidbar 10:33). The Anan, the Cloud of Glory within which G-d's presence dwelled, indicated that the first (and only) stop in the desert before entering the Promised Land would be their port of entry, the area from where the spies/scouts were sent (see 10:12 and compare it with 12:16 and 13:26). The "Ark of the Covenant" was going to lead them to their "place of rest" (10:33), an expression that refers to the Promised Land before it was completely conquered and settled (see D'varim 12:9). Instead, the nation complained soon after they started to travel (13:1), which spiraled into a series of missteps that led to the entire generation being banned from entering the Promised Land (see Bamidbar 14:29-30).

This "turning point" would seem to come precisely at the point where there is a two sentence paragraph that is surrounded by upside-down nuns (Bamidbar 10:35-36). The nation setting out for the Promised Land immediately precedes it, and their complaints are described right after it. Interestingly, one opinion in the Talmud (Shabbos 115b-116a) considers these two verses to be its own "book," with the parts of [what we call] Sefer Bamidbar before and after it also considered their own "books" (so that there are really Seven Books of Moses, not five). Some have therefore described the first "book" within Sefer Bamidbar as "the book of what could have been" and the third one as "the book of what actually was." However, there are two parts included in the first "book" that don't seem to belong in "the book of what could have been," but are more appropriate for "the book of what actually happened even though it wasn't the original plan."

When describing how the nation knew when it was time to travel and when to set up camp (Bamidbar 9:15-23), the Torah informs us that sometimes they stayed where they camped only overnight (9:21), sometimes for one day/night (ibid), or two days (9:22), a month (ibid) or a year (ibid). If the original plan was to make just one trip, straight to the Promised Land, why would there need to be any other trips? If this "book" is limited to how things ideally would have been, why would the journeys necessitated by subsequent sins be included here?

It is possible that had the nation gone straight to the Promised Land, the Anan would have still guided them within it, to show them which areas should be conquered next (going from "menucha" to "nachala"). The Torah does tell us (Sh'mos 23:29-30, well before it was decreed that this generation couldn't enter the land) that the conquest of the Land would be done slowly, thereby necessitating even year-long encampments. However, these encampments being phrased in past tense indicates that this was something that actually happened, not something that could have happened. Nevertheless, even if these encampments ended up happening in the desert rather than within the Promised Land, since they could have happened in the Promised Land, it is not that awkward to have them included in a "book of things that could have been."

Another section that doesn't seem to fit in a "book of what could have been" is the conversation between Moshe and his father-in-law (Bamidbar 10:29-32), where Moshe asks him, twice (10:29 and 10:31-32), to join them on their trip to the Promised Land. Unless Moshe was wrong about his father-in-law staying with them being a good thing, Yisro's refusal to do so belongs more in the "things that didn't go as planned" section than in the "this is how it would have

ideally been" part. It is also strange that the Torah never tells us what the response to Moshe's second request was, instead going straight into the nation's first journey (10:33). We know from Sefer Sh'mos (18:27, see Ramban) that Yisro didn't stay, but in Sefer Bamidbar we are left hanging, without knowing how he responded to Moshe's second attempt at convincing him to stay. Additionally, rather than the conversation between Moshe and his father-in-law being a separate section, followed by a new section that described the nation traveling, the two narratives are told within the same section, making it seem as if they are intrinsically connected. Why is the conversation between Moshe and his father-in-law so integral to the nation traveling away from Sinai?

The other opinion in the Talmud is that the upside-down nuns signify that the verses contained within them really belong elsewhere (after 2:17, when the Mishkan itself, including the Ark, started to travel), but was "moved" here to separate between two narratives about the consequences of sin. There is much discussion about what "consequence of sin" is discussed before these verses. The Talmud says that the first consequence of sin was referenced in the words "and they traveled from the mountain of G-d" (10:33), with R' Chama ben Chanina explaining that "they turned away from G-d." Aside from the discussion about how the nation "turning away from G-d" is understood from their "traveling from the mountain of G-d," much has been written to try to explain Rashi's approach to what this "turning away from G-d" refers to. Rashi's words (in his commentary on the Talmud) are, "within three days of traveling, the rabble developed a craving to complain about the [lack of] meat in order to rebel against G-d." Since Rashi quotes a verse (11:4) that appears after the upside-down nuns, both "consequences of sin" are really on the same side of the "divider." How is there a separation if the two "consequences of sin" are mentioned back-to-back after the "dividing verses?" And why is the "consequence of sin" that is mentioned first considered to be the "second consequence of sin" while the one mentioned second is called the "first consequence of sin?"

The fact that neither Yisro's final response or the information that he left is mentioned here indicates that the reason his conversation with Moshe was included had nothing to do with what his answer was; something about Moshe's attempt to convince Yisro to stay directly impacted the traveling that is described immediately afterwards. Moshe asked him "not to abandon us, as it was for this reason that you knew our encampments in the desert, and you shall be our eyes" (10:31). Although Rashi, following Chazal's lead, explains how these words can be understood as an argument why Yisro should want to stay, the simple meaning (and one of the approaches Rashi brings) is that the nation needed Yisro to help them get to the Promised Land. Whether or not this was what Moshe meant, that's certainly the way it could have been understood.

One of the purposes of the Mishkan was to recreate the Sinai experience (see Ramban's introduction to Parashas T'rumah). Leaving Sinai did not mean distancing themselves from G-d; His presence would be with them as they traveled through the desert, He would fight for them as they conquered the Promised Land, and He would "dwell" in the Temple after the Land was conquered. But if G-d was going to still be with them, leading them to the Promised Land, why would they need Yisro's expertise to navigate through the desert? Why would Yisro leaving be considered an "abandonment?" I would suggest that because of the conversation Moshe had with his father-in-law, many got the impression that the connection between them and G-d was going to change radically once they started out for the Promised Land; the super-natural existence they were experiencing would become a more natural existence, one consistent with being landowners who must plow, plant and harvest in order to survive. [Tosfos, quoting a Midrash, understands the first "consequence of sin" to be leaving Sinai "like a child who is running away from school." If the nation realized that G-d was still going to be with them as He was while they were at Sinai, there would be no reason to run away; "school" was going to still be in session no matter where they traveled to.]

The perception that they were "leaving G-d's mountain" and starting a more mundane life led to their craving meat, a crave that started before they complained about traveling. It is therefore considered the first "consequence of sin," even if they weren't vocal about desiring meat until after they had complained about the travel (see Mizrachi). In order to highlight the difference between their perception and the reality, immediately after Moshe's conversation with Yisro is mentioned, the Torah tells us that G-d was with them the whole time (10:34), leading the way (10:33). From this perspective, the "turning point" was not right after the paragraph surrounded by upside-down nuns, but right before it.

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

In this week's parsha, G-d tells Moshe (Moses) that a person (ish) who is impure because of contact with a dead body (tameh lanefesh) or too far away from Jerusalem (derekh rehoka) is given a second chance to eat the paschal lamb. (Numbers 9:10-11)

The phrase tameh lanefesh speaks about a spiritual deficiency - when one has contact with a dead body, emotional and religious turbulence sets in.

The phrase vederekh rehoka, speaks of a physical impediment - one who is simply too far away to partake of the paschal lamb on time.

Indeed, throughout Jewish history we have faced both spiritual and physical challenges. What is most interesting is that in the Torah the spiritual challenge is mentioned first. This is because it is often the case that the Jewish community is more threatened spiritually than physically.

Despite its rise, anti-semitism is not our key challenge. The threat today is a spiritual one. The spiraling intermarriage rate among American Jews proves this point. In America we are so free that non-Jews are marrying us in droves. The late Prof. Eliezer Berkovits was correct when he said that from a sociological perspective, a Jew is one whose grandchildren are Jewish. The painful reality is that large numbers of the grandchildren of today's American Jews will not be Jewish.

And while we are facing grave danger in Israel, thank G-d, we have a strong army which can take care of its citizens physically. Yet, in Israel, it is also the case that it is the Jewish soul, rather than the Jewish body, that is most at risk.

Most interesting is that even the phrase vederekh rehoka, which, on the surface, is translated as a physical stumbling block, can be understood as a spiritual crisis. On top of the last letter of rehoka (the heh), is a dot. Many commentators understand this mark to denote that, in order to understand this phrase, the heh should be ignored. As a consequence, the term rahok, which is masculine, cannot refer to derekh

which is feminine. It rather refers to the word ish, found earlier in the sentence. (Jerusalem Talmud Psakhim 9:2) The phrase therefore may refer to Jews who are physically close to Jerusalem yet spiritually far, far away.

The message is clear. What is needed is a strong and passionate focusing on spiritual salvation. The Torah teaches that the Jewish community must continue to confront anti-Semitism everywhere. But while combating anti-Semitism is an important objective in and of itself, the effort must be part of a far larger goal - the stirring and reawakening of Jewish consciousness throughout the world.

RABBI YISROEL CINER

Parsha Insights

This week we read the parsha of B'haaloscha. "Speak to Aharon and say to him: When you kindle the lights; toward that central light on the Menorah itself (the Menorah was comprised of a center column, referred to as 'the Menorah itself,' with three branches rising out of each side of that central column) shall all seven lights cast their illumination. [8:2]"

Why does this parsha of the kindling of the Menorah follow immediately after the parsha dealing with the offerings brought by the Nesiim {Princes} of each tribe? Aharon felt a lacking when he saw the representatives of each tribe bringing their offerings while he and his tribe of Levi were not represented. Hashem consoled Aharon by informing him that his portion is greater than theirs-he kindles the lights of the Menorah. [Rashi 8:2]

The twelve Nesiim each brought the following offerings for the consecration of the altar: a silver k'arah {dish} and a silver basin, each filled with a mixture of flour and oil; a golden pan filled with incense and numerous animals to be sacrificed.

Although the identical offering was brought by each of them, the Torah deemed it worthwhile and necessary to spell out the details of these offerings twelve separate times. Why was this done?

The Ramban [7:4-5] explains that these identical offerings that were brought did not come about through a collective decision that was reached. Rather, each of the Nesiim, based totally on their personal reasoning, thought to bring this offering.

Each of the tribes had been told by Yaakov of the unique role and position that they would serve in Klal Yisroel {Yisroel as a whole}. The first to bring the offering was Nachshon from the tribe of Yehuda. From his tribe would come the royal kingdom of Israel. He therefore brought a bowl, representing the oceans that surround the earth and a basin, representing the round earth. His tribe, with the advent of the Moshiach {Messiah}, would supply the king who would include all of that in his dominion.

The second offering was brought by Nesanel from the tribe of Yissachar. He brought the same exact offering as Nachshon but for very different reasons. The tribe of Yissachar was wholly dedicated to Torah study. Torah is compared to bread because it sustains the spiritual aspects of man as bread sustains the physical aspects. Each loaf of the Lechem Hapanim {the special bread that were on the Shulchan-Table of the Mishkan-Tabernacle}, which represented this concept, was shaped by a k'arah. That was what Nesanel had in mind when he, representing the tribe of dedication to Torah study, brought the silver k'arah as his offering.

The third offering was brought by Eliav from the tribe of Zevulun. They were sea merchants who used the proceeds of their commerce to form a partnership with Yissachar. By graciously providing the material support for Yissachar, they equally divided the spiritual riches of Yissachar's labor. Eliav brought a k'arah, resembling the sea upon which his tribe would travel.

The same applied to the remaining nine tribes. Each brought an offering that represented their unique involvement and that offering happened to be identical to that which each of the other tribes brought. That is why the gifts were spelled out in detail a total of twelve times-once for each tribe.

Perhaps that was the cause of Aharon's feeling that he and his tribe were lacking because they had not

brought this offering. Were they lacking a special, unique contribution to Klal Yisroel?

Hashem answered that he would be kindling the lights of the Menorah and as such, his was greater than theirs. What was this special aspect of the Menorah?

The Menorah was comprised of a center column with three branches rising out of each side. The Sforno explains that the three branches on the right represent those whose involvement is in the spiritual realm. The three branches on the left represent those who involve themselves in the materialistic realm in order to aid those involved in the spiritual. All six wicks pointed inward toward the main column of the Menorah which rose straight up toward the heaven, representing that all actions of this world must be dedicated and focused toward serving Hashem.

The middah {attribute} of Aharon and his descendants-disciples is a pursuer of peace. A pursuer of peace recognizes that dissension is not necessarily the result of one party being right and the other wrong. Rather, it can come about as a result of different views and perspectives on a given situation. One can be at peace with everyone when one recognizes the unique aspects and contributions that each individual offers. Even though different people's ways might be different, it is only the combination of each contribution that brings about the complete sanctification of Hashem's name.

The offerings of each of the Nesiim represented their unique path in serving Hashem. The Menorah represented the synthesis of all those paths into one heavenly thrust. Aharon was chosen to kindle the lights of the Menorah and to kindle the flames of peace and unity in the heart of each and every Jew. As such, Hashem told Aharon that there is no need for you to feel lacking. Yours is far greater than theirs.

May we be from the disciples of Aharon...

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

RavFrand

Transcribed by David Twersky
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman

Parshas Beha'aloscha contains the Misonenim [the complainers] [Chapter 11]. The Jews wanted to eat meat. They remembered all the good delicacies they ate in Egypt and bemoaned the fact that they were lacking those same foods in the Wilderness. "All we have is this mann". This is another example of "The more things change, the more they stay the same." Jews are always complaining about the food! They longed for the onions and the garlic they ate in Egypt. The pasuk teaches [Bamidbar 11:10] that Moshe heard the people crying to each other (bochim l'mishpachosem) at the opening of his tent. Rashi explains that the expression "bochim l'mishpachosem" means that the people would gather in family groups out in the open to publicize their complaints to one another. It was like a family picnic, but instead it was a family "cry-in". Everyone sat on their stoop or sat on their doorstep and publicly complained about the food situation in the wilderness. Rashi further cites the teaching of the Rabbis that the crying was "concerning the families"- namely they complained about the forbidden sexual relationships that the Torah legislated for the Jewish nation.

According to this Rabbinic tradition, the main complaint was not about onions. This event happened not long after the receipt of the Torah. The Torah prohibited many women from marriage-the relationships known as the "Arayos" prohibitions. This is what they were crying about. They said "onions" but they meant "Arayos". Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky asks a simple question: How can we put words into their mouths? The pasuk says they complained about the onions and the cucumbers. Why do the Rabbis interpret this to be something totally different than the simple reading of Scripture (p'shuto shel Mikra)?

In his Sefer, Emes L'Yaakov, Rabbi Kaminetsky points out similar phenomenon many times in Chumash where Chazal put a far more sinister interpretation on what would otherwise seem to be innocent comments. Another example is in next week's parsha where Moshe charges the Spies to gather intelligence about the nations of Canaan? When the Spies come back and report that the people are "stronger than we are" the Zohar (which is quoted by many of the commentaries as well) claims that the Spies had an agenda. They were afraid that when they to go into the Land of Israel they would lose their positions of leadership and honor in the nation. Therefore, they subconsciously sabotaged the plans to take the nation into Eretz Yisrael so that they would not lose their grip on power. Here too, Rav Yaakov asks: How do Chazal know this?

Again, in describing Lot's decision to settle in Sodom following his breakup with Avram, a simple reading of the pasukim would indicate that the decision was made on the very practical grounds that Lot was a shepherd and that the land surrounding Sodom was fertile and bountiful. Here too Chazal attribute sinister motives to Lot: He specifically picked the area because of its reputation for lewdness and immorality. Sodom was "Sin City" of its time and according to the Rabbis (without any apparent support from the Biblical text), that is why Lot went to Sodom. The same question can be asked here. Why can't we take Lot's statement at its face value? Simply say that he wanted to go to Sodom because the land was fertile?

Rav Yaakov answers: Chazal do this because they descend to the depths of man's psyche. They are telling us something very profound about human nature. Everyone has subconscious feelings and forces and desires that perhaps even the person himself is not completely aware of. Something goes on inside a

person that is more than meets the eye. Chazal, either through ruach haKodesh or through their sensitive intuition of how human beings function, know that something deeper is going on. When people gather on their front doorsteps and cry out loud so that everyone will hear, they are not just crying about onions! People do not cry about onions. They are crying about something else.

Likewise, there were other lush places in Eretz Yisrael. When Lot specifically picked Sodom-why did he do it? It is because whether he realized it or not there were subconscious motivations occurring within him. This happens in each and every person. A person must always introspect and check his motives.

When people go to psychologists or psychiatrists and tell them their problems, if the professional is keen and he understands human nature, he recognizes that what the person is saying is NOT what he really means. These are the words he is saying, but there is something else that is really going on in his mind. A wise individual or a highly trained professional will be able to detect what is really happening deep within a person's mind.

That is why Chazal repeat this approach over and over in their explanation of the Chumash narrative. How do they know that? They know it because they know and understand people. They are trying to tell us that this happens to each and every one of us. We each have hidden agendas and subconscious motives. We have what is called 'negius' [personal bias]. We do not really know or understand ourselves fully because we are so subjective about decisions that affect us.

How can we protect ourselves from these blind spots? As we have said at other times, the counsel we must follow is that of the Mishna in Avos [1:6]: Make for yourself a Rav [mentor] and acquire for yourself a Chaver [close friend]. We need to have our actions and our motives reviewed by our peers or by our teachers who can "tell it to us like it is!" Without such advice and guidance, we cannot function.

A person who says "I know I am 'nogeah' [biased], but..." will conclude that sentence by making a statement that he should totally ignore. If one is 'nogeah' he is disqualified from ruling about the matter-period! So who will pasken for him? That is why it is so crucial that everyone have a Rav or a Rebbe or an older advisor and counselor to give him guidance in those matters about himself for which he is disqualified from ruling. That is why Pirkei Avos advises to be "koneh" [literally purchase] a chaver). One needs to make that investment, whatever it takes, to ensure the ability to have honest peer-review of his actions.

Today, relationships are superficial. A 'chaver' is not just someone you say hello to or occasionally schmooze with. A 'chaver' is someone you can open up to and trust. It is someone you can tell things 'as they are' about yourself and he can return the favor for you. Everybody needs that. The reason Chazal spend so much time pointing this out throughout the Chumash is because they are trying to bang this idea into our heads: You cannot trust yourself."

Having a Rebbe and having a Chaver is one of the most precious commodities in life. This is why the Mishna which advises "Make yourself a Rav and acquire for yourself a Chaver" concludes with the words "and judge every man with the benefit of the doubt (l'kaf zechus). Invariably in life, one's Rav or his Chaver will disappoint him. We will be upset with him for not coming to a Simcha or not devoting as much time to us as we expected of him. It is easy to be dismissive under such circumstances: "That is not a Rav; that is not a friend." The Mishna exhorts us "Hevey dan es kal ha'Adam l'kaf zechus"- cut the person some slack; give him the benefit of the doubt! Do not walk away from relationships like that for such petty reasons. Such relations are just too important to abandon so lightly! Even if it means bending over backwards and coming up with crazy explanations for him-do it. It is worth preserving the relationship of a Rav or a Chaver.

SHLOMO KATZ

Hama'ayan

In merit of Patrick Carrera's son, Nathan Carrera for his freedom

Moshe said, 'Six hundred thousand footmen are the people in whose midst I am, yet You say I shall give them meat, and they shall eat for a month of days. Can sheep and cattle be slaughtered for them and suffice for them? If all the fish of the sea will be gathered for them, would it suffice for them?'" (11:21-22)

Commentaries wonder: How could Moshe Rabbeinu have doubted Hashem's ability to provide meat for Bnei Yisrael? R' Yeshaya Reiniger z"l (19th century; rabbi of Hranice / Reinitz, Moravia) explains:

The Gemara presents an opinion that Bnei Yisrael in the desert were not permitted to eat meat except when they brought a sacrificial offering. Although Rabbi Akiva appears to argue, Tosafot suggest a way to understand the Gemara so that there is no argument.

Accordingly, Moshe's question can be understood as follows: There are only three kohanim in the world-Aharon and his sons, Elazar and Itamar. Can enough sheep and cattle be slaughtered by just three kohanim to suffice for 600,000 people?

But, R' Reiniger adds, if that was Moshe's question, why did he mention fish? He explains: This should not be read as a question, but as an exclamation: "If all the fish of the sea will be gathered for them, then it would suffice for them!" (Chiddushei Rabbi Yeshayah)