

Nasso 2017

1.

Why is Nasso the longest parsha?

Parparos L'torah page 35. **This parsha is usually lained after Shevuos. This parsha is longer than all of the other 54 parshios.** There are 176 pesukim. The longest sefer in Tanach is Tehilim. The longest perek in Tehilim is 119. That perek also consists of 176 pesukim. It is also interesting to point out that the longest Mesechta in Shas is Bava Basra, which consists of 176 daf. **What is the deeper explanation of this?** The Kli Yakar (Vayikra (23, 16)) is bothered as to why the Torah doesn't mention a specific day as to when the Torah was given. Furthermore, the Torah itself does not institute a specific holiday to celebrate the giving of the Torah. Why? This pasuk symbolizes matan Torah. The pshat (explanation) is we need to view every single day as a new matan Torah. Every day is a Har Sinai. Hashem didn't want to tell us the day of Matan Torah because every single day a person needs to view it as a Ma'amad Har Sinai. The Gemara in Eruvin (54b) says the more a person learns the more flavors he'll find. The Sifri (parshas Va'eschanan 6, 6) tells us that the Torah should be new upon us and not like something that is old. The words of Torah should be new to us even if we have been learning for years. You will find a new chiddush every day. **During Shevuos, the time when we received the Torah we are very eager to learn. But what will happen afterwards? Do we still have that enthusiasm? The long length of this parsha symbolizes the following deeper idea; we must enjoy the Torah and make it new, even after Shevuos.**

2.

Bechor vs talmid chacham vs kohen vs king, who wins? Who duchins?

"Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying. Take a census of the sons of Gershon as well, according to their fathers' household, according to their families." (4, 21-22)

"וידבר יקוק אל משה לאמר. נשא את ראש בני גרשון גם הם לבית אבתם למשפחתם."

The pasuk (4, 2) previously related that Hashem originally commanded Moshe and Aaron to count Kohath. **Why is Kohath counted before Gershon after the fact that Gershon was the bechor? The Bamidbar Raba (6, 1) answers that Kohath lifted the Aaron as stated in the pasuk (4, 2). They are therefore counted first, even though Kohath wasn't the bechor. The Keli Yakar (4, 22) asks a question on this Bamidbar Raba. Why wasn't the avoda of lifting the Aaron given to Gershon? Hashem wanted to show the importance of respecting talmedai chachamim. Since Kohath learnt more Torah, they were bigger talmedai chachamim and thus preceded.** If the task of carrying the Aaron would have been given to Aaron then one might have incorrectly thought that since Gershon is a bechor he is therefore first. This is not so. Rather, the task of carrying the Aaron was given to Kohath in order that we know that the reason why this task was given to him was because he was a talmid chacham.

We can bring a proof to this from a Mishna. The Mishna in Horeyos (13a) says that a talmid chacham is greater than an ignorant Kohen Gadol (אם היה ממזר תלמיד חכם וכהן גדול עם הארץ ממזר (תלמיד חכם קודם לכהן גדול עם הארץ)). The Gemara says that **a mamzer who is a talmid chacham is better than a Kohen gadol who enters into the Kodosh Kadashim.** The Gemara derives this

from the pasuk in Mishlei (3, 15) “It is more precious than pearls, and all your desires cannot compare to it.” (“יקרה היא מפנינים וכל חפצריך לא ישוו בו.”) The Gemara darshens the word פנינים (pearls) to mean inside (לפנים). How is it possible for a Kohen gadol to be ignorant? The Tiferes Yisroel answers that he bought his way up by bribing people. The Keli Yakar explains that in order to be a Kohen your father needs to be a Kohen. Kings crowns are filled with all types of jewels and gems. One must be a royal descendant in order to wear that crown. The crown of Torah is higher and more precious than pearls. The Torah is for everyone though. Anyone could wear the crown of Torah.

Another reason why lifting the Aaron wasn't given to the bechor, Gershon, was in order that he wouldn't become haughty. Also, since Moshe and Aaron were descendants of Kohath, Kohath therefore merited carrying the Aaron. Rashi comments on the Mishna in Avos (4, 13) and says that the crown of Torah is better than the crown of Kehuna and kingship because one has to earn it. The Rambam (hilchos talmud Torah perek gimal and Gemara in Yuma (72b)) also elaborates on this idea.

Why did the Gemara need to darshen the aforementioned pasuk? What was wrong with the simple explanation that the Torah is more precious than pearls and the like? What was wrong with the simple explanation of the pasuk? **It is obvious that the Torah is more important than any physicality. Rather, the chidush is that the Torah is more precious than even something very spiritual. Meaning, the Torah is even holier than the Kohen gadol who enters into the Kodesh Kadashim. The talmid chacham is even holier than the holiest person, in the holiest place and at the holiest time of the year.** (Otzros Hatorah Shevuos pages 299-300)

According to the aforementioned explanation **why do Kohanim duchin? Seemingly, it would be more appropriate for talmidai Chachamim to duchin.** The pesukim (6, 23-24) say “speak to Aaron and his sons, saying: So shall you bless the Children of Israel, saying to the: May Hashem bless you etc.” Our holiness depends on Torah learning and mitzvah performance as the pasuk (15, 40) states. Before we perform mitzvos we say 'אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו' ('Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us etc.') The closer we are to the Torah, the holier we become. This being so, seemingly it is more fitting for the talmedai chachamim to duchin because they are holier than others, including the Kohanim, due to the Torah they learn. Rabbi Aaron Walkin (the Av Beis Din of Pinsk in his introduction to Nesach Aaron quoted by Kemetzei Shlal Rav (pages 80-81)) answers this question based on a Gemara. The Gemara in Sota (38b) quotes Rebbi Yehoshua Ben Levi who says we only give the cup of benching to someone who has a good eye. The Marsha explains the reason behind this halacha. The positive effect of benching depends on the cavana of the bencher. Before the Kohanim duchin they say 'יצונו לברך את עמו ישראל באהבה.' 'Hashem has commanded us to bless His people Israel with love.' **Duchining will have the greatest effect when said by someone who is truly sincere about what he says and the success of those who he is blessing.** The level of loving others like ourselves is very hard to attain. (See parshas Acharei- Kedoshim 2017 for how it is possible to love others like ourselves.) It is for this reason that the Kohanim duchin. It is assumed that the Kohanim will have the proper cavana. Why? **The Kohanim don't have a portion in the land of Israel. Their income comes from the people they are blessing. They will definitely have the right cavana for this reason.**

Even though this is not leshma, nevertheless the Gemara in Pesachim (50b) states that ‘one should learn Torah and perform mitzvos not lesham shamayim (as opposed to not learning or

performing the mitzvos at all), because if one learns and performs mitzvos not lesham shamayim, he will end up learning and performing mitzvos lesham shamayim'/(אמר רב יהודה אמר רב לעולם)/ (יעסוק אדם בתורה ובמצות אף על פי שלא לשמה שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה).