



Parshas Behaalosecha 2021, the holiest envy!

This week's Parsha Perspective is in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward and Edward Ben Efraim. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing & in honor of the Refuah Shlema of Shaul Ben Berta, Sasson Bezalel Ben Batia, Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Tova Basha. May they have a complete and speedy recovery.

Our Parsha begins with Hashem telling Moshe that Aaron's job is to light the Menorah each day in the Mishkan. Hashem then gave Moshe the process of purification that the tribe of Levi had to go through before working in the Mishkan. They needed to shave all the hair from their body, be sprinkled with ashes, and bring special two sacrifices.

On the anniversary of the exodus from Egypt, the Jewish nation brought the Pesach sacrifice in commemoration. However, some Jews were ritually impure from carrying the bones of Yosef HaTzadik; thus, they were not allowed to participate in the Pesach sacrifices. So they went to Moshe and asked him why we should lose out on bringing the Korban Pesach. Moshe turned to G-d, who said they should bring the Korban Pesach one month later.

However, a question comes to mind: The first Rashi at the beginning of our Parsha writes why the Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah is commanded immediately following the sacrifices given by the tribal leaders.

He explains that Aaron was unhappy and distressed when he saw all but his tribe offering sacrifices in honor of the dedication of the Mishkan.

But why would Aaron feel down and depressed if he already knew that only his family (the Kohanim) would serve in the Mishkan? Why did the sacrifices of tribal leaders affect him so profoundly that G-d responded with the commandment of lighting the Menorah?!

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a Moroccan Kabbalist from the early 1700s*) answers that Aaron felt down because Moshe was performing the services of the Mishkan. In Parshas Terumah (Shemos 28:1), we learn that Moshe did all the work and rituals for twelve days during the Mishkan's inauguration.

During which, a different tribe offered a special sacrifice each day in honor of the Mishkan's initiation. Consequently, Aaron felt sad and depressed because neither he nor his tribe had offered any sacrifices as of yet in the Mishkan.

So G-d commanded Moshe to remind his brother that only Kohanim were allowed to work in the Mishkan from the 13th day of the inauguration and onwards. And Aaron specifically had an exclusive job: preparing and lighting the Menorah every day in the Mishkan.

However, the Rabbeinu Bachya (*Rav Bachya ben Asher, a Spanish commentary*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He explains that Aaron was not sad and depressed; instead, he was envious of the other tribal leaders. But he was not jealous of the fact that they offered sacrifices, and he did not.

On the contrary, **Aaron was envious of the passion and enthusiasm with which they offered their sacrifices.** He was jealous of their excitement and desire to help dedicate the Mishkan.

The Rabbeinu Bachya continues that Aaron's envy and jealousy of the tribal leader's passion helped and encouraged him to serve G-d in a deeper manner. He compares jealousy to ego, that any more than a small amount can be deadly and lethal both spiritually and physically.

But a small portion of each can be beneficial and valuable in your service to G-d. As the Talmud in Sotah (5A) explains, **a small ego can instill confidence in a person to inspire, engage, and lift others around them.**

Similarly, the Talmud Bava Basra (21A) writes that **a minor amount of jealousy shows a person who lacks direction, a method on how to achieve what they want in their life.** To follow the behavior of those they deemed successful, to help them improve and find their way.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that **if you are jealous and envious of others, it will paralyze and stop your growth.** Jealousy urges and forces you to define yourself by other people and not by who you truly are. This is both detrimental and harmful to your growth, as it leads you on a path that is not your own.

But aspiring to grow and achieve like someone else can give you the motivation and necessary drive to begin your journey. To propel you to focus and concentrate on finding your uniqueness and purpose in this world.

***"Your biggest competition is the person
staring back at you in the mirror."***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*