Points to Ponder

Lech Lecha 5782

**וּמְקַלֶּלְךָ֖ אָאֹ֑ר Those who curse you I will curse (12:3)** - **Rav Moshe Sherer ztl**. notes that the parallel of Mikallel versus Arur do not match. Thus, Aaor might mean to “enlighten.” There are people who do not “get it” and therefore assume the worse in you. The job is not to curse them back but rather, to enlighten them.

**וְאֶת־הַנֶּ֖פֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂ֣וּ בְחָ֑רָן The souls that they made in Charan (12:5) - Onkelos** notes that these souls were committed to the Torah. What happened to them? **Rav Schachter Shlita** explained that this group never went down to Mitzrayim, choosing to remain in Eretz Yisrael instead. Thus, they never were able to join the emerging nation fully. Rav Schachter added the quote of **Chasam Sofer (cited by Avnei Nezer**) that when we are in Eretz Yisrael we are Klal Yisrael but the status of a Jew in Chutz L’Aretz is that of a Yachid. The souls of Charan attached to the Klal not to the individual obligation of being a Jew..

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**וְהַכְּנַֽעֲנִ֖י אָ֥ז בָּאָֽרֶץ The Cananaanites were in the land (12:6) - Rashi** notes that the people from Canaan came and stole the land from the people of Shem. Rashi seems to be giving us a lesson in history. The problem is that in Beraishis, Rashi says that the nations of the world will claim that WE are the thieves implying that the Canaanim were there first. How do we understand the contradiction? **Sifsei Chachamim** says it is about paying for the improvement that the Canaanim did to the land. But **Rav Yisrael Reisman Shlita** explains that the nations of the world automatically claim that we are the thieves. Our job is to know the truth and live by it.

**וְאַנְשֵׁ֣י סְדֹ֔ם רָעִ֖ים וְחַטָּאִ֑ים The people of Sodom were bad and sinful(13:13)** - What do we mean when we use the word “sinful?” **Rav Yerucham Gorelick ztl. quoted the Brisker Rav ztl.** who explained that when we repeatedly sin, it becomes almost impossible to distinguish between the sin and the person and that is what is meant by “and sinful” -- that the person is now know as a “Cheftza” of sin. Rav Gorelick added that this was the difference between Bruriah and Rabbi Meir. Bruriah saw the sin and the person as distinct. Rabbi Meir felt that there isa time when the 2 are one and of the same.

**הֲרִמֹ֨תִי יָדִ֤י I raised my hand to Hashem (14:22) -** Why did Avraham have to swear? Why didn’t he just refuse the king’s offer? **Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski ztl.** notes that when confronted with something we may desire but believe we should refuse, our first impulse may be to refuse it. Afterward we may begin to calculate and rethink our decision. Avraham knew of the human tendency. Therefore, he took an oath to bind himself to his decision. In that way, he would not have to struggle to resist rationalizations.

**הִתְהַלֵּ֥ךְ לְפָנַ֖י וֶֽהְיֵ֥ה תָמִֽים Go before me and you will be Tamim (17:1) - Sforno** explains that Tamim here means Shalem. In other words, a good Jew needs to be Shalem. How does one achieve this? **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztl.** explained that Torah is called Temimah and is also Shalem. What is the difference between Tamim and Shalem? Tamim is in total quantity. One cannot be Tamim without keep the entire Torah. Shalem refers to an aspect within each and every facet of Torah wherein one cannot cut corners in fulfillment of the Mitzva. Avraham was a prime example of both -- he was Shalem and Tamim.

**וְלֹֽא־יִקָּרֵ֥א ע֛וֹד אֶת־שִׁמְךָ֖ אַבְרָ֑ם וְהָיָ֤ה שִׁמְךָ֙ אַבְרָהָ֔ם You no longer be known as Avram (17:5)** - What was the purpose of his name change? **Rav Kook ztl.** explained that Avram means father of Aram and limited Avraham’s ability to impact to an impact on one nation. By changing his name to Avraham, Hashem was making his destiny into the father of a multitude of nations -- the entire human race and charged with seeking their welfare.

**Haftara**

**נֹתֵ֥ן לַיָּעֵ֖ף כֹּ֑חַ He gives strength to the weary (Yeshayahu 40:29) - Rav Dovid Feinstein ztl.** noted that in Galus there are times we feel that we lack the strength to survive but Hashem gives us the strength to endure and will continue to do so until He will bring the Geulah.