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8 years of Points to Ponder on Parashas Eikev

**וְהָיָ֣ה | עֵ֣קֶב תִּשְׁמְע֗וּן עקב תשמעון And it will be when you listen (7:12) - The Daas Zekanim** notes that we need to listen to the mitzvos that people trample on with their feet. What mitzva do people trample with their feet? He answers that the mitzva of Tzitzis is an example of one such Mitzva that a person tramples. **Rav Zilberstein Shlita** explains that this is the basis of the Halacha (O.C. 21:4) not to let the Tzitzis drag on the ground for it appears that one who does so disgraces the Mitzva. The problem is that the mogen Avraham seems to limit the prohibition of the dragging Tzitzis to dragging them over a grave implying that everywhere else should be ok?A similar problem arises when we think of the praise due to Ben Tzitzis Hakesses (Gittin 56a) whose Tzitzis went on pillows while everyone else’s did not -- implying that he was unique -- not that he was simply following the law? Rav Zilberstein explains that the issue in the cemetery is when the Kever is raised -- that even then one should not let the Tzitzis drag. And in regard to Ben Tzitzis, the prohibition is when they drag at the time of putting them on. At that point the Tzitzis look like he is sweeping with them. At other times this is not a problem.

**וְהָיָ֣ה | עֵ֣קֶב תִּשְׁמְע֗וּן אֵ֤ת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים֙ הָאֵ֔לֶּה And it shall come to pass when you listen to the Mitzvos (7:12) – Rashi** notes that the word eikev is used as it reminds us of Mitzvos that one tends to treat as insignificant and tramples on with his heel. If we correctly observe even these, we can be sure that Hashem will reward us. **Rav Elyashiv ztl.** added that one must also be on the lookout for the Aveiros that one tramples through. Like Yonah in the boat, whose sin seemed to be much smaller than those of the idol worshippers on the boat with him and still was to blame for the hurricane at sea, we too do not know the value of the Mitzvos and Avairos and therefore cannot judge which ones to trample through.

**וְהָיָ֣ה | עֵ֣קֶב תִּשְׁמְע֗וּן אֵ֤ת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים֙ הָאֵ֔לֶּה If you listen to the Mishpatim (7:12)** – Why Mishpatim as opposed to the Eidos and Chukim? **Rabbi Dr. Reuven Bulka ztl**. suggested that unlike Eidos and Chukim, one could observe Mishpatim because they are logical or he could observe them because they are logical AND spiritual. When using the latter reasoning, one becomes concerned not only with the legalities but also the realities too. The ultimate test of authentic religious commitment is in the ability to transcend societal norms and observe life on a spiritual plain as well.

**וְהָיָ֣ה | עֵ֣קֶב תִּשְׁמְע֗וּן And it will be when you hear the Mishpatim and observe them so Hashem will all observe the Bris and the Chessed that he promised your forefathers (7:12)** – Why does one need to rely on the Bris, the Chessed and Zechus Avos if we are already listening to the word of Hashem? **Rav Schlessinger Shlita** explains that sometimes one cannot rely on his merits alone. Perhaps it is due to the fact that s/he has racked up many, many Avairos or isn’t among those who listen to Hashem regularly. In these cases the turn toward listening to Hashem can perhaps be utilized as a recognition that the “real” person is the new one who is following the word of Hashem as did the forefathers, and in return perhaps Hashem can consider the Bris and the Chessed of the forefathers in helping the present generation.

**רַבִּ֛ים הַגּוֹיִ֥ם הָאֵ֖לֶּה מִמֶּ֑נִּי אֵיכָ֥ה אוּכַ֖ל לְהֽוֹרִישָֽׁם: When you tell yourself that there are too many nations, how will you defeat them (7:17)-** The definition of Bitachon is often misunderstood. **Rav Mattisyahu Salomon Shlita** points out that many mistakenly believe that Bitachon means that one believes that things will turn out the way that you want. However this is incorrect. Rather Bitachon means that one does not need to rely on statistics in the face of hope. Even when facing a threat, one has the right to rely on Hashem and place his hope in Him.

**כָּל־הַמִּצְוָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר אָֽנֹכִ֧י מְצַוְּךָ֛ הַיּ֖וֹם תִּשְׁמְר֣וּן לַֽעֲשׂ֑וֹת The entire Mitzva (8:1) – Rashi** notes that when you prepare to do a Mitzva, you should do it completely. **Rav Shaul Yisrael ztl.** added that the main point of the performance of Mitzvos is to do Mitzvos since they are Hashem’s will even when we do not fully understand it logically. We do Mitzvos since it is the will of Hashem in totally without differentiation between the acceptance of different Mitzvos.

**אֶ֤רֶץ חִטָּה֙ וּשְׂעֹרָ֔ה The land of wheat and barley (8:8) – Rav Schachter Shlita** was asked about the Beracha on a granola Bar and explained that all the 5 grains are included in the wheat and barley. Each, when eaten in its proper form has a Beracha we recite – Hamotzee or Mezonos. If it is eaten raw, like in the case of raw oats, the Beracha would be HaAdama. When mixed with sugar, corn syrup and fruit, we would follow the majority. In the case of the granola bar, the majority should be the oats and thus, the proper would be HaAdama.

וְאָֽכַלְתָּ֖ וְשָׂבָ֑עְתָּ וּבֵֽרַכְתָּ֙ **And you will eat and be satisfied (8:10) - Rav Dovid Lau Shlita** quoted **the Gerrer Rebbe** who contrasted Bentsching with the recitation of Asher Yatzar. Bentsching has a limit for how long one may recite it while Asher Yatzar can be recited for a much longer period of time. Why the difference? The Rebbe explained that the theme of Birkas HaMazon is about breaking one’s Gaava. That can only happen when a person recognizes that his sense of personal satisfaction (Savata) is due to Hashem’s goodness as opposed to his personal achievement. That realization is achieved when the person comes to the reality at his high point -- on a full stomach.

**ואכלת ושבעת וברכתAnd you will bless Hashem (8:10) - Rav Meir Shapiro ztl**. once came to test some students and did not bring any prize for those who excelled. He offered the students a great thought instead. He noted that the one letter not in Birkas HaMazon is the letter “Peh” because when one bentches with Kavana, Hashem has no anger toward him and his food is found before him in abundant supply. One of the students who overheard the thought took it upon himself to always bentch with calm and to do so out of a bentcher -- always. During the Holocaust, this young man found himself as part of a Nazi selection and davened to be saved in the merit of his bentching. As the selector came close, he stood on his toes and was saved. Later, he was working in the kitchen in the camp where it became obvious that he did not know a thing about a kitchen. He was punished to dig a hole of large proportion with only a few forks as digging implements. A wagon came by dropping fruit and vegetables which he gladly scooped up. The other prisoners begged him for some which he gladly exchanged for their assistance in digging the hole. By the time the guard came back, the hole was dug and the man’s life was saved -- with an abundance (the vegetables) as a result of the bentching he was careful with (Rav Elimelech Biderman).

וְאָֽכַלְתָּ֖ וְשָׂבָ֑עְתָּ וּבֵֽרַכְתָּ**֙ And you will eat and be full and bentsch (8:10) – Rav Mordechai Greenberg Shlita** noted that the order of Berachos in Bentsching follow **Rav Kook’s** description of how to build a nation. First, one needs to take care of the material needs of the individual (hence Moshe wrote HaZon at the time the Mana fell) Then one worries about the physical needs of the masses (Hence Yehoshua wrote Al HaAretz which focuses on the needs of the collective), then Dovid worried about the spiritual needs of the people and thus wrote Rachem – because Yirushalayim spiritually connects us all together. Shlomo added the Beis HaMikdash in, because it is the spiritual home of the world. Why mention all of this at bentsching time? Rav Motti suggested that when one is eating, he is focused totally on himself at a coarse physical level. At that time especially it is important for a person to realize that there is so much more for him to achieve.

זְכֹר֙ אַל־תִּשְׁכַּ֔ח אֵ֧ת אֲשֶׁר־הִקְצַ֛פְתָּ **Remember how you angered Hashem (9:7)** - **Rav Schachter Shlita** would remind us that the **Ramban** seems to be unsure as to whether this command was only for the generation in the Midbar or whether it applied to the future generations as well -- making it a Mitzva that is part of the 613. The **Mogen Avraham** adds that this is a Midrash in Yalkut Shimoni. Thus, we can fulfill the Mitzva of remembering this Shabbos. Why not make a big fuss about this? Mogen Avraham notes that to publicly humiliate Bnei Yisrael is not a good idea. The **Torah Temimah** in his biography that the reading of Parshas Parah fulfills the obligation. Why? Rav Schachter explained that if it is a Mitzva than the intent is to teach the idea of Teshuva L’Rabim -- not merely to make us feel guilty. That is done through the Parah Adumah.

**מַמְרִ֥ים הֱיִיתֶ֖ם עִם You were rebelling with Hashem (9:7)** – Why is the word rebelling “WITH Hashem” used instead of “Rebelling AGAINST” Hashem? **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin ztl.** noted the Tanchuma that Manna fell even when the Jews made the Eigel. In fact, the Jews fed it to the Eigel. This is the intent of the Possuk – You rebelled with Hashem. In other words, you rebelled with Hashem’s own tools using it against Him.

**ואשב בהר ארבעים יום וארבעים לילהWhen I went up to the mountain to get the Luchos ...I stayed on the mountain for 40 days and nights (9:9) - Rashi** notes that the word staying refers to tarrying. What is Rashi trying to tell us? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl**. pointed out that when one is somewhere for a short period of time, he tends to devalue the time due to its shortness. Here the Torah tells us that Moshe did not do so. Despite being on the mountain for 40 days, he learned as if he was going to be there for the rest of his life. It is a great message for the rest of us.

וָֽאֵשֵׁ֣ב בָּהָ֗ר אַרְבָּעִ֥ים יוֹם֙ וְאַרְבָּעִ֣ים לַ֔יְלָה **I sat on the mountain for 40 days -- I did not eat or drink (9:9)** - The **Midrash Tanchuma** determines that Moshe was Moser Nefesh for Torah and therefore it is called Toras Moshe. **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** explains that the Kinyan for Torah is Mesirus Nefesh. Mesirus Nefesh was displayed here by not eating or drinking for 40 days and nights. However, that was true in Shomayim where it is not Derech Eretz to eat and drink. Ergo, Moshe’s Kinyan came about not only because of his Mesirus Nefesh for Torah but also for the Derech Eretz that should precede it.

וָֽאֵשֵׁ֣ב בָּהָ֗ר אַרְבָּעִ֥ים יוֹם֙ וְאַרְבָּעִ֣ים לַ֔יְלָה  **And I sat at the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights (9:9)** – The Gemara (Megillah 21b) notes that at a different point Moshe notes that he was standing for 40 days and 40 nights. The Gemara debates the apparent contradiction. One of the explanations of this issue is that when Moshe was learning something difficult he sat but the easier ones he stood for. **Harav Hershel Schachter** **Shlita** explained in the name of **Rav Chaim of Volozhin** that there are 2 different concepts – that of Kavod HaTorah and that of Talmud Torah. When they can both be fulfilled then Kavod Hatorah must be displayed. However, when one would need to divert his attention from Talmud Torah in order to demonstrate Kavod Hatorah, this ought not be done. Hence for difficult things, Moshe sat.

**אֶת־שְׁנֵי֙ לוּחֹ֣ת הָֽאֲבָנִ֔ים And Hashem gave me the 2 tablets of stone (9:10**) – It is interesting that while the word is read in the plural, it is written as a single word (Luchas). This teaches us that the Dibros had the same significance as if they had been written on the same tablet. **Rav Dovid Feinstein Shlita** highlights this point by noting the redundancy in the word shnei and Luchos both of which imply a multiple. The Torah wants us to know that one cannot properly fulfill the first 5 without properly doing the second and vice versa. True Torah observance requires a person to link his Bein Adam L’Makom with the Bein Adam L’Chaveiro.

ק֣וּם רֵ֤ד מַהֵר֙ מִזֶּ֔ה  **Go down quickly (9:12)** - Why did Hashem tell Moshe to go down quickly only AFTER the Eigel began? Why not send him down EARLIER and stop the episode? **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin ztl.** explains that when Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah and the yoke of Shomayim in the process, they became like Malachim, correcting the sin of Adam Harishon. However, when the other nations didn’t join them, the world was left in a confusion -- with some people like Malachim (Bnei Yisrael) and others not able to release themselves from animalistic choices. At that point, Hashem gave permission to the Satan to unite the world by bringing Bnei Yisrael down, if they could not raise the nations of the world. Hence, the delay until after the Eigel happened and the reason we continue to suffer the consequences even today. We didn’t raise the rest of the world and fell prey to them instead.

**פְּסָל־לְךָ֞ שְׁנֵֽי־לוּחֹ֤ת אֲבָנִים֙ כָּרִ֣אשֹׁנִ֔ים At that time Hashem told me to make new stone tablets like the first ones and come to me on the mountain and make an ark of wood for yourself (10:1) – Rashi** notes that Moshe’s Aron noted here was different than the one that he made and placed in the Kodesh Kodashim. This one was the one that would go off to war with him. **Rav Belsky Shlita** notes that it is interesting that the Gemara (Bava Basra 14b) notes that both sets of Luchos were kept in the Aron in the Mishkan. What then was the purpose of taking an empty Aron to war? He answers that the broken luchos were taken out of the main Aron and placed here for the Jews to take with them into battle. Rav Belsky explains that this is a major lesson in humility – Jews going to war experience tremendous miracles – either in victory or in crushing defeat. The Shivrei Luchos joined them on the battlefield to remind them not to become too haughty on the home front – that Hashem saves us in perilous times not because of our own righteous rights but rather as a result of Zechus Avos, the great name of Hashem and His love of Bnei Yisrael.

**אֶ֨ת־הַדְּבָרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר הָי֛וּ עַל־הַלֻּחֹ֥ת הָרִֽאשֹׁנִ֖ים  And I wrote on the Luchos the ten things that were on the first Luchos that you broke (10:2**) – When the Talmud refers to the Luchos that Moshe broke, the Talmud adds “Yashar Kochacha She’Shibata” You should have strength that you broke them. **Rav Pinchas Teitz ztl.** noted that the only time we find the Yashar Kochacha being expressed is when the rebuilding process is undertaken. He adds that destruction alone is never a reason to say Yashar Koach. Only then in the rebuild can one say Yashar Kochacha – that there was a purpose.

**ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמךAnd now Yisrael what does Hashem ask from you Kee Im L’Yirah (10:12)** - The Gemara (Berachos 33b) explains that in regard to Moshe, Yirah WAS a small thing. But why would Moshe, speaking to the simple people, present Yirah as a small request? For THEM it was a big deal? Rav Schachter Shlita quoted Rav Soloveitchik ztl. who explained that the comma needs to be replaced -- that Bnei Yisrael COULD show respect to Moshe (L’Gabei Moshe to show respect it is a simple matter that everyone could follow). **Rav Schachter Shlita** would often add that the measure of success that a student has in Torah study often is a result of the Midda of Hisbatelus he shows to his teacher.

**כִּ֣י אִם־לְ֠יִרְאָ֠ה Now Yisrael, what does Hashem ask of you save Yiras Hashem (10:12)** – What is Yiras Shomayim? Why does it use the word Yirah – fear, if that is so opposite the style of today’s world? **Rav Shlomo Freifeld ztl.** explained that Yiras Shomayim is not based on fear – as in fear of personal harm. Rather, it is an experience of reverence – where one finds something bigger in the world around him or her – like looking at the declaration of independence or the Mona Lisa. Both have boundaries so as not to get too close. There is a fear…That same reverence needs to be within us if we are to appreciate Godliness in the world and in the Torah that built and runs it. If we get THAT idea, we will get the keys to our future.

**כִּ֣י אִם־לְ֠יִרְאָ֠ה And now Yisrael what does Hashem ask of you except a bit of Yirah (10:12)** – The Midrash (Berashis Rabba 21) comments that the word “V’Ata (now)” is a hint to the mitzvah of Teshuva based on our Possuk. How does one see the connection to Teshuva in this Possuk**? The Chofetz Chaim ztl.** suggested that when one wants to do Teshuvah, often his Yetzer Hara will drag him down by suggesting that he remember his past and how Teshuva is now futile. That’s why the Torah changes its tune to remind us not to think about the past – focus on the present – become a person filled with Yirah NOW – thereafter the proper Kappara for the past can be sought after.

**כִּ֣י אִם־לְ֠יִרְאָ֠ה And now Yisrael what does Hashem ask from you except for Yirah (10:12)** – The gemara (Shabbos 31b) notes that Hashem’s only demand in this world is for Yirah. This leads the gemara (Menachos 43b) to conclude that one must make 100 Berachos each day. What is the connection between making 100 Berachos and Yiras Shomayim**? Rav Zaidel Epstein ztl**. explains that Chazal were trying to teach us how to acquire a sense of Yiras Shomayim. One learns to acquire an awareness by constantly reviewing it. This happens with Yiras Shomayim by constantly reciting Berachos – Baruch Ata, Melech HaOlam etc.

**וּמַלְתֶּ֕ם אֵ֖ת עָרְלַ֣ת לְבַבְכֶ֑ם  And you should circumcise the Orlah of your hearts (10:16) – Rav Gifter ztl.** explained the metaphor here by noting that just like the foreskin covers something that ought to be revealed, earthly desires need to curbed as these extras hold us back from finding our true hearts that serve Hashem.

ו**ּמַלְתֶּ֕ם אֵ֖ת** **עָרְלַ֣ת** **לְבַבְכֶ֑ם  And you shall circumcise the orlah of your hearts (10:16)** – What is the meaning of these Possukim in context to choosing the fathers? **Rav Moshe Wolfson Shlita** explains that there are 2 aspects to a Milah – Priah and Milah. Milah reveals the Bris while Priah makes sure that the Orlah does not extend and cover it over (similar to Zachor and Shamor by Shabbos – See Ramban in Parshas Lech Lecha). The main Milah was done by the Avos. At this point our job is to remove the cover that often blocks the heart from seeing things properly.

**וְלֹ֥א יִקַּ֖ח שֹֽׁחַד And He does not take a bribe (10:17)** – In what instance can someone bribe Hashem? **Rav Moshe Sternbuch Shlita** explained that there are those who argue that for the sake of Kiruv Rechokim, they can lighten their presentation of Judaism and be inauthentic. They argue that by doing so, it is a bribery to Hashem to save the souls. To this Moshe notes that Hashem is not corruptible.

**וְאֹהֵ֣ב גֵּ֔ר לָ֥תֶת ל֖וֹ לֶ֥חֶם וְשִׂמְלָֽה: Hashem is the loftiest of Gods, great awesome etc…and he loves the stranger to give him bread and clothes (10:17-18) – Rashi** cites the Gemara in Megillah (31a) which notes that where we find the greatness of Hashem we also find his humility**. Sivan Rahav Meir** pointed out that many modern philosophers think that the greatness of Hashem is seen in his ability to change nature. However, the true greatness of Hashem is in the fact that while he is the Hashem over great things, His towering presence does not preclude his involvement in helping even the most downtrodden in society. To be a Gadol, sometimes we need to listen to the smallest of things.

**אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ תִּירָ֖א  Hashem your God you should fear (10:20)** – The Talmud tells the story of Shimon HaAmsunee who used to explain each time it said “Es” in the Torah. When he got to Es Hashem Tirah he stopped… Until Rabbi Akiva explained – that it came to add Talmidei Chachamim. **Rav Moshe Chaim Lau ztl HyK,** offered a novel interpretation to this gemara. He noted that when Shimon got to Es Hashem Elokeicha Tirah he realized he reached the pinnacle of personal achievement. That’s when Rabbi Akiva explained that there is more room – L’Rabos Talmidei Chachamim – not to rest on one’s own personal achievements but to create more Talmidei Chachamim too. (At the time, he was being Maspid **Rav Meir Shapiro ztl**. who lived his life L’Rabos Talmidei Chachamim.)

**אֶת־֧ה' אֱלֹקיךָ תִּירָ֖א You should fear Hashem (10:20)** – The Gemara (Kiddushin 57a) notes that Shimon HaAmsuni would have a special lesson to be learned from every time the Torah used the word “Es” in the Torah, until he came to “Es Hashem Elokeicha Tirah”when he did not have a lesson and thus stopped the style of learning. When the students asked him about all of the previous lessons he told them that in the same way he deserved reward for the teaching, he should also receive reward for the stopping. However, how does this answer the students question? **The Chasam Sofer ztl.** explained that the primary purpose of all of our Mitzvos is the fact that observing them helps us gets us to the stage of Yiras Hashem. Hence, not giving the Derasha is as consistent with the lesson as giving the others.

**כִּ֤י עֵֽינֵיכֶם֙ הָֽרֹאֹ֔ת  Your eyes see all of the great work that Hashem did (11:7)** – If we are supposed to “see” Hashem’s miracles so clearly through his handiwork, why is it that some see more clearly than others? **Rav Mordechai Pogremonski ztl**. likened this to one walking through an art museum with a smudge on his glasses. While the art is magnificent, the wearer only sees smudges and imperfections. It is our attunement that needs to be clued in if we are to be able to perceive the greatness of Hashem.

**לִמְטַ֥ר הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם תִּשְׁתֶּה־מָּֽיִם: A land of mountains and valleys where you can drink the rainwater (11:11) – Rashi** notes that the mountain is better than the plains for crop growth. **Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl Shlita** pointed out that this is a proof to the Tamud’s (Taanis 3b) statement that one snowfall is as good for the mountains as 5 rains for the ground. Rav Nebenzahl explains that the mountains needs 5 times the amount of rain since it grows 5 times of the amount of crop. This is one of the great Niflaos HaBorai that he sees to it that more moisture comes to the mountains (in the form of snow) in order to improve the growth conditions.

**אֶ֕רֶץ אֲשֶׁר־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ דֹּרֵ֣שׁ אֹתָ֑הּ The land that Hashem seeks (11:12) – Rashi** explains that Hashem seeks all of the land via seeking the status of Eretz Yisrael. **Rav Aharon Kotler ztl.** explained that this is the explanation of the intent of those who use the word “MeeTuvah” in Bareich Aleinu noting that if Eretz Yisrael is blessed to provide blessing then it can affect the world. If it won’t work for Eretz Yisrael, no land will be successful.

וְהָיָ֗ה אִם־שָׁמֹ֤עַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ֙ אֶל־מִצְו‍ֹתַ֔י **If you will listen to my Mitzvos (11:13)** - We note that this section of the Shema is known as Kabbalas Hamitzvos. Why do we need to accept the Mitzvos if we already accept the yoke of Heaven in the first section of Shema? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** explains that while the responsibility to do Mitzvos comes with one who accepted the yoke of heaven, Hashem wants us to also develop a Simcha Shel Mitzva and accept the Mitzva responsibility not as a force but as an opportunity.

**בְּכָל־לְבַבְכֶ֖ם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶֽם With all your hearts and all of your souls (11:13)** – Notice that this section of Shema does not mention all of your “Meod” often referencing wealth. Why? The **Kotzker Rebbe ztl.** explained that in regard to most people, their search for wealth is their soul. Hence no need to add words to the Torah. **Rav Schachter Shlita** suggested that this section of the Torah is in the plural and although there are those individuals who might value their property over themselves, a Tzibbur does not since it is not that crazy. He added another level of interpretation from **Rav Yosef Engel ztl.** who explained that in regard to the Tzibbur a financial threat is also a threat to the soul and the community can be Michallel Shabbos for a communal threat (hence the Rav of the police force allows police to investigate financial crimes on Shabbos according to this).

**השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכםBe careful lest your heart be swayed (11:16) - Rav Hutner ztl.** would comment that a human being is like an open door. If he allows the room to be filled with Torah and Mitzvos then his life will be full. However, if he is not careful, the room will still become filled -- but instead of being filled with Torah, it will be filled with waste -- like Avodah Zara.

**וְחָרָ֨ה אַף Hashem will be angry at you (11:17)** – Why does the Possuk use the name Hashem instead of the name “Elokim” in context of Hashem’s punishing power? **Rav Eliyahu Lopian ztl.** pointed out to a number of his students who were returning to Chutz LaAretz to do business that since this section of the Torah was delivered to Bnei Yisrael with the assumption that they were in a place in their lives that they were indeed listening, the Torah was speaking from a perspective wherein the sinners were going to make an about -face on the direction that they were headed. The punishment would then come from a place of Rachamim to save the people from oblivion.

**וְלִמַּדְתֶּ֥ם אֹתָ֛ם אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶ֖ם לְדַבֵּ֣ר בָּ֑ם  And you shall teach your children to speak them (11:19)** –Why do we say “Es” Bneichem instead of the simpler and shorter “LBneichem”? **Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner ztl.** suggested that the Torah speaks to the Mitzvah of Chinuch three times: in VaEschanan twice (V’Shinantam, V’Hodatam and this time). Each time contains a deeper meaning: The mitzvah of V’shinantam speaks to making the words of Torah strong and clear, the mitzvah of V’Hodata speaks to the responsibility of how the Torah was acquired experientially while the possuk here speaks to acquiring a Derech which requires a back and forth face to face meeting.

**לְמַ֨עַן יִרְבּ֤וּ יְמֵיכֶם֙ וִימֵ֣י בְנֵיכֶ֔ם So that our days and the days of our children shall be extended on the land that Hashem promised (11:21)** – The gemara notes that there are old people in Baval as well because they come to Shul early and leave late (Berachos 8a). Why is it that the Gemara knows that in Chutz L’Aretz the secret to long life is being associated with Shul attendance? **Rav Nissan Alpert ztl.** suggests one of 2 possibilities: either that we are close to Hashem in his place we merit long life or when we give time to Avodas Hashem so Hashem gives us extended life to expand the time we donated to Him. Thus, the reward (in the second case) is apparent everywhere in the world because of the dedication to Kavod Shomayim there.

**וּלְדָבְקָה־בֽוֹ: To follow all of his ways and stick to him (11:22)** – How does one “stick” to Hashem if he is an all consuming fire? **Rashi** answers that we need to stick to the Talmidim and the Chachamim and that will be considered as if we stuck to Hashem himself. **Rav Shlomo Fisher** notes that the same issue could have been raised earlier (10:20) but is not. Why? Rav Fisher answers that this Parsha appears right after the section of V’Haya Im Shamoa which deals with the regular person who goes to work every day and needs to connect to Hashem perhaps by connecting to the Talmidei Chachamim.

**כל המקום אשר תדרוך כף רגלכם בו לכם יהיהAny place that you tread upon will be yours (11:24) - Ramban** learns 2 critical Halachos here. The first is that Kedushas Eretz Yisrael is a concept promised to the Avos. The other is that when we capture other lands that were not previously endowed with Kedushas HaAretz, that land too, will be endowed with the responsibility for Mitzvos HaTiluyos BaAretz. **Rav Gifter ztl.** wondered if there was a Mitzva of Yishuv HaAretz on these lands. In other words, is Yishuv HaAretz a Mitzva of Yirusha and only inherited lands have a Mitzva of Yishuv or is the Mitzva dependent on Kedushas HaAretz and does it apply anywhere that has Kedushas HaAretz?

לֹֽא־יִתְיַצֵּ֥ב אִ֖ישׁ בִּפְנֵיכֶ֑ם **No person shall stand in front of you (11:25)** - **Rav Yechiel Yitzchak Perr Shlita** once noted that the reason we refer to Tefilla as Amidah is that while on the one hand it seems logical for a person to subjugate himself before Hashem in Tefillah, it does not appear that Hashem wants that. Hashem wants us to serve him not as crushed, mushy frog shaped humans. He wants us to serve Him as tall upright human beings. When we come to pray as human beings who crackle with creativity, we choose to serve Him (and thus no one else). We do not get squashed into doing so.

**Haftara:**

**וַתֹּ֥אמֶר צִיּ֖וֹן עֲזָבַ֣נִי ה וַֽאדֹנָ֖י שְׁכֵחָֽנִי Zion said “Hashem has left me” (Yeshayahu 49:14) – Sfas Emes** (on the Possuk Mah Hashem Sho’el) explains that you cannot command love where it does not exist so there must be a Nekudah or a spark of love in every Jew that can sometimes be covered. **Rav Dr. Norman Lamm ztl** added that the intention here is clear. Tzion never despairs of loving Hashem. We only worry that He is done loving us. But here is where we can take solace. As long as we have not lost that Nekudah we can aspire and rely on the fact that Hashem will reciprocate and return to us.

# גַּם־אֵ֣לֶּה תִשְׁכַּ֔חְנָה וְאָֽנֹכִ֖י לֹ֥א אֶשְׁכָּחֵֽךְ: Does a women forget her child these also you should forget but I will not forget you (Yeshaya 49:15) – The Midrash notes that while Hashem may forget these (Eileh) he will never forget “I” (Anochi). In other words, Hashem can forgive the Eileh of the Cheit HaEigel but not the Anochee of the ten commandments. Rav Schachter Shlita notes that selective memory is critical for our existence and survival. We generally rely on the basic level of our relationships and use that to forgive the transgressions of that relationship when the particular violation of the basic understanding of the relationship does not match up. Hence, Hashem can forgive the aberrations but not the core.

**גם אלה תשכחנה ואנכי לא אשכחך Even if these are forgotten, I shall not forget you (Yeshayahu 49:15) - Rav Uri Sharki Shlita** notes that Bnei Yisrael were worried lest their sins be permanently etched in the mind of Hashem. To that Hashem answers that Gam Ela -- the Eleh of the Eigel will be forgotten. Then the Jews feared that their merits in Har Sinai would also be negated -- to that Hashem responded that Anochi ( the rest of the Sinai experience) would NOT be forgotten. Why? Rav Sharki explains that the message here is that while Hashem has the ability to “forgive and forgo” sin -- he is interested in the RELATIONSHIP with us. That relationship is not undone easily -- and is never forgotten.

מַדּ֨וּעַ בָּ֜אתִי וְאֵ֣ין אִ֗ישׁ **Why did I come and there was no man (Yeshayahu 50:2**) - The Talmud learns that this refers to a time when Hashem comes to a Shul and doesn’t find ten people there. **Rav Schwab ztl**. explains that any opportunity to engage self improvement without seizing upon it disappoints Hashem. The Navi is telling us that He gave many chances for a meeting of the minds but felt that He was the only one trying.

**כִּֽי־נִחַ֨ם ה' צִיּ֗וֹן  For Hashem has already consoled Tzion and its ramparts and he took its midbar and turned it into Eden and its desolation into the garden of Hashem (Yeshayahu 51:3) – Rav Avraham Rivlin Shlita** noted that the double description of the desolation and the rebuilding process further continues the theme of the double Nechama that will be found at the time of the coming of Moshiach. He adds that there is an intense comparison between the improvement of the quality of Jewish life in the future and that of the improvement in the land quality – somehow the regeneration and growth of the botany of the land of Israel is intensely tied to the growth potential of the people who have the rights to her land. Hence, Moshiach is also referred to in Novi as Tzemach.