CTCT-20181127_002636_0



9 years of Points to Ponder on Parashas Ki Savo

**וְהָיָה֙ כִּֽי־תָב֣וֹא** **And it will be when we enter the land (26:1)** – Chazal Tell us that the word “V’Haya” is a language of joy. What is the joy here? The **Ohr HaChaim** explains that the joy is the settlement of the land of Israel. This is the meaning of the Possuk “Az Yimaleh Sichok Peenu”. His comments are odd because those words are written about the future – not the Yishuv HaAretz**? Rav Volch**  answers that the Simcha is apparent when one experiences a sense of Sheleimus. That sense happens when we are in our land, free to observe our Mitzvos and experience the Shechina. That existed when the people came into the land and will be so when we go back in the future.

**וְלָֽקַחְתָּ֞ מֵֽרֵאשִׁ֣ית כָּל־פְּרִ֣י הָֽאֲדָמָ֗ה You shall take from the first fruits of the land (26:2) - Rav Nachman of Breslov** points out that there is a wonderful lesson of optimism to be learned from the Mitzva of Bikkurim. The Torah is teaching us that there is always a chance of renewal. In other words, no matter what troubles have befallen us in the past (symbolized by the parsha of Mikra Bikkurim) there is no room for despair in the world. We pick up and we begin anew and we get the next chance to restart and grow.

**וְאָֽמַרְתָּ֣ אֵלָ֗יו And you shall say to him (26:3) - Rashi** explains that when you bring the Bikkurim you need to tell the Kohein you are not an ingrate. Why must you SAY you are not an ingrate? Isn’t it enough not to BE an ingrate? **Rav Noach Weinberg** explained that saying something out loud concretizes your thoughts and makes them real. Saying it out loud enables you to see where you are holding. There are no more pretenses.

**הגדתי היום**  **I stated today (26:3)** – Why is it that the one bringing the Bikkurim for the first time needs to make the declaration of Arami Oived Avi? What about the one who has been living in the land for a long time? Is that person exempt? **Rav Yosef Kahaneman** , Ponevezer Rav, would often note that even one living and working Eretz Yisrael for a long time needs to develop within him, the excitement of one bringing Bikkurim for the first time. The same can be said for Tefillah and Divrei Torah – they need to be as fresh to us as the first chance we get to learn them.

**הגדתי היום I have stated today to Hashem (26:3)** - When the one bringing the Bikkurim comes, he makes a declaration that he has already spoken his words. Yet, until he begins with Arami Oveid Avi we do not find him saying anything. What did he already say? Why the past tense in “Higaditee”? **Rav Yitzchak Koppelman** explained that sometimes actions speak louder than words. At the same time, not all words convey purposeful messages. The one bringing the Bikkurim declares that his actions indicate that he is complete in word and deed with his gratitude to Hashem as shown by all of the steps that he is taking to get to the current point in his Bikkurim adventure (See also Sforno and Netziv).

**וענית ואמרתAnd you will respond and declare (26:5) - Rashi** notes that the declaration needs to be made out loud. Why? **Rav Dovid Kronglass**  pointed out that people naturally cry out when they have needs but when they want to express thanks, that is expressed too quietly. **Rav Akiva Males** would often add that we always reach out to people to daven on behalf of the sick but need to remember to also reach out to update them that there is a time to stop and offer thanks for the Tefillos instead. **Ramban** (Shemos 13:16) points out that the purpose of Shuls is the chance to publicly thank Hashem for all of his never ending Chessed.

**ְעָנִ֨יתָ וְאָֽמַרְתָּ֜ And you will respond and state (26:5) – Rashi** notes that this means that the Parsha needs to be stated out loud. **The Beis HaLevi** explained that one cannot argue Shomeiya K’Oneh by Birkas Kohanim since the Mitzva is a voice based one that requires Kol Rom. The **Netziv** countered that Bikkurim too, is a Mitzva performed by reading yet the commentaries on the Mishna allow Shomeiya K’Oneh. How are we to understand the difference? **Rav Schachter quoted Rav Soloveitchik**  who explained that by Birkas Kohanim and Kriyas HaTorah we are not asking for Kol Rom – we are trying to make a connection between the speaker and the crowd learning from him. The declarer of Bikkurim is stating a series of facts. This can be declared by others on his behalf. However, if he needs/wants to connect to the people, that he must do by working on his own.

**וְעָנִ֨יתָ וְאָֽמַרְתָּ֜ And you will respond and recite (26:5)** - The Mishna Bikkurim notes that the people who brought the Bikkurim were embarrassed that they couldn’t read the Parsha so they made a Takana that each farmer, learned or not would have the section read in front of him by the Kohein so as to avoid embarrassment. Tosafos (Meseches Megillah) notes the same thing in regard to the process of Leining where we have a Baal Kriyah for everyone so as not to embarrass the Oleh. **Rav Schachter**  would quote Rav Soloveitchik who noted that there was a Minhag that the only Aliyah given to the Baal Korai was the tochachah so that this Takana could be kept. **Rav Nebenzahl** told Rav Schachter that he did not know of the basis for this minhag. Similar minhagim existed by weddings of having the Rav read the Harei At for the Chassanim to follow (see also Netziv here if farmer led or read the reading before or on behalf of the farmer).

**ְעָנִ֨יתָ וְאָֽמַרְתָּ֜ And you will answer and say (26:5)** – **Rashi** adds that this recital needs to be out loud. Why does this make a difference? **Rav Meir Shapiro, Lubliner Rav**  explains that Korbanos come from all sections of the world – Domem (the trays of the Nesiim), Tzomeiach (the Korban Mincha), chai (animals) and Midaber (Nachshon jumped in as a korban). We find a parallel in the bikkurim – Domem in the baskets, Chai in the animals brought with the bikkurim, Tzomeiach in the Bikkurim themselves and by offering the Mikra out loud we are highlighting the Midaber part too.

**אֲרַמִּי֙ אֹבֵ֣ד אָבִ֔י Lavan tried to destroy my father (26:5) - Rashi** comments that Lavan tried to destroy the entire Jewish existence. But even if Lavan had been successful at destroying Yaakov who says the Shevatim would not have survived? **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz**  explains that once you destroy the leader, you have effectively demoralized and destroyed the people. Without the Rebbe, there is no life.

**וַיֵּ֣רֶד מִצְרַ֔יְמָה He went to Egypt (26:5)** - The Talmud (Shabbos 89b) notes that technically Yaakov and his family should have gone down to Egypt in chains. It was Yaakov’s merits that saved him. **Rav Kook**  explained that it was not a particular sin that made the nation deserving of going into Egypt in this brutal way. Rather, it was a means to demonstrate to the future generations that the nation would be able to withstand even the challenges of Galus. However it was the power of the individual who was Yaakov that did not allow him to be taken to Mitzrayim in such a manner. Rav Kook adds that this demonstrates that even the Shibbud was done to demonstrate Hashem’s love for his people. Even the Galus is a means to get to the final purpose -- that of Gilui Kavod Hashem.

**וַיָּ֥גָר שָׁ֖ם בִּמְתֵ֣י מְעָ֑ט He lived there (26:5)** - We notes in the Haggadah that this teaches us that Yaakov went to dwell in  Mitzrayim temporarily, not permanently. The **Maharal** adds that had Yaakov intended on going permanently, we could never have been redeemed. The **Baal Shem Tov** adds that where a man’s thought that’s where he is. **The Novominsker Rebbe**  added that we can learn this concept ourselves when we consume ourselves with Eretz Yisrael it is as if we ARE in Eretz Yisrael. If our minds are there then so are we.

**וַיָּרֵ֧עוּ אֹתָ֛נוּ הַמִּצְרִ֖ים וַיְעַנּ֑וּנוּ The Egyptians were bad to us (26:6) - Rav Yechiel Yitzchak Perr** noted that the word “VaYareiu” comes from the word to make us evil. He explained that in order to turn public opinion against the Jews, Pharaoh had to make us rebels and people who repay gratitude with a bad attitude. This was the only way he could get the Egyptians to enslave people. He needed to make them subhuman. It is an ongoing pattern that replays itself throughout our history.

**וַיָּרֵ֧עוּ אֹתָ֛נוּ הַמִּצְרִ֖ים The Egyptians mistreated us (26:6) - Rav Schachter**  would quote Rav Soloveitchik who explained that the correct phrase should have been “Lanu” not “Osanu”. But this was the nefarious intent of the Egyptians. They wanted us to be seen as the “other” and worthy of degradation. This has been a canard that began in Egypt and continues to fuel antisemitism until today.

**וַנִּצְעַ֕ק**  **And we cried out to Hashem our God (26:7) – The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh** notes that there is a hint here that one needs to daven to Hashem daily to be saved from the Yetzer HaRa. When we call out to Him there is a promise that He will answer. **Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel**  noted that Tefillah is not just about requesting. It is an opportunity for awareness. The Chinuch notes that Bikkurim in general was a means of making the thoughts of his mind come alive through his mouth. If he is stirred then his prayers are accepted. Hence, we call to Hashem – in order to be personally stirred and to ask for His mercy in defeating the Yetzer HaRa and for us to answer the call to assist at the same time.

**וַיַּ֧רְא אֶת־עָנְיֵ֛נוּ He saw our affliction (26:7)** - Chazal tell us that this refers to the disruption of family life (Preeshus Derech Eretz). **Rav Schachter**  reminded us that this is specifically relevan to this Possuk as the idea of Inyui is one of ambiguity. Rav Schachter added that we live in a world of Preetzus in which things are all explained quite explicitly. The Torah wants us not to be so explicit in matters of intimacy. The Torah wants married life issues to be discreet. Thus in the possuk of obscurity, they interpreted the challenge to be in terms of Pritzus.

**וּבְמֹרָ֖א גָּדֹ֑ל And with great awe (26:8)** - The Midrash (and Haggada) note that this refers to the revelation of the Shechina. Usually one would expect great terror to be a time where Shechina would NOT be realized**? Rav Lamm**  uses this and other examples to highlight the ironies of the Pesach night. These ironies remind us that when man confronts his own limitations, finitudes and inadequacies -- when he sees how week he is -- that is when he discovers his greatest blessing and strength and hope --- in Hashem.

**ושמחת בכל הטוב And you shall rejoice with all of the good Hashem has given you and your family (26:11) - Rav Nosson Tzvi Wachtfogel**  used these possukim to introduce the manner that is ideal for a person to protect himself from becoming addicted to materialism. When a person realizes where he came from, who charted his course of destiny, why and for what purpose -- than one does not forget the purpose of material gain and to the contrary, uses it to sanctify the name of Hashem in the world.

**הַשְׁקִ֩יפָה֩  Look down from Your holy abode (26:15)** - In Berashis<18:16> **Rashi** reminds us that any time that there is a “Hashkafa” it offers an evil outcome except for Hashkifa here. It is curious that Rashi makes that comment in Berashis and not here. Why? **Rav Yechiel Perr** thought that perhaps one could say that even among the angry mobs of Sodom whose cities had to be destroyed, would have been saved had they practiced Tzedaka. By highlighting the message of a positive Hashkifa, namely from our parsha in the context of the negative by Sodom, one can learn that the antidote to the evil decrees is the act of Tzedaka.

**וְשָֽׁמַרְתָּ֤ וְעָשִׂ֨יתָ֙ And you will observe and keep them (26:16) - Rashi** comments that in the merit of bringing Bikkurim this year, you should be zoche to be blessed to bring them again. **Rav Dovid Lau**  noted that implicit in the Blessing is an additional one for a life extension for an additional year to be able to bring the Bikkurim. Alas with the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, the ability to bring bikkurim has been replaced with the davening three times a day. What is the connection between Bikkurim and prayer? Basing himself on the comments of the Sfas Emes, Rav Lau suggested that both are predicated on the ideal of Hakaras Hatov and one who gets it will merit to suggest longer life.

**הַיּ֣וֹם הַזֶּ֗ה** **On this day Hashem your God commands these Chukim (26:16)** – Th**e Zohar** comments that the word HaYom refers to Rosh Hashana. Why would that day in particular be associated with HaYom? **Rav Yosef Ben HaRoosh of Tunis**  explained that the day that the entire year is dependent upon, is Rosh Hashana. This is the intention of the Possuk here – today Hashem Elokeicha commands you – and watches both as Hashem and Elokeicha – Rachamim and Din – so do the Mitzvos and earn a good reward.

**וַֽהֲקֵמֹתָ֤ לְךָ֙ אֲבָנִ֣ים גְּדֹל֔וֹת** **And you shall establish large stones for yourself (27:2)** – There were three times that the Jews were told to set up stones – in the land of Moav, in the Yarden and some that were taken from the Yarden and placed at Har Eival. **Rav Nissan Alpert**  explained that the stones symbolized roadblocks and require major work to get rid of. Moshe had them establish the roadblocks in order for them to see how many different roadblocks they needed to overcome in order to survive in the desert and how they survived – and thrived.

**וְהָיָה֘ בְּעָבְרְכֶ֣ם אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן֒ תָּקִ֜ימוּ אֶת־הָֽאֲבָנִ֣ים הָאֵ֗לֶּה When you will enter the land, you will establish these stones (27:4) - Rav Dessler** noted that normally when someone comes to a new place, s/he first works on setting up his/her home and getting to know the stores. Only afterward, does one settle in and begin to learn. However, when it comes to settling the land, we begin with Torah. (This is similar to the idea we noted when we examined **Rav Yisrael of Shklov in the Profiles of the Pandemic series** -- with the study of the students of the Vilna Gaon.)

**הַסְכֵּ֤ת | וּשְׁמַע֙ Imagine and hear (27:9) - Sforno** notes that the translation of the word Haskeis means to picture in one’s mind. **Rav Wolbe**  explains that Sforno means to tell us that picturing Torah ideas helps us fulfill these Mitzvos properly. If we picture the Cheirus at the Seder, we experience a better picture of the story of the exodus. The more that one invests in picturing the events and expeirences of Torah, the more real the event becomes. Picturing the ruling of Hashem can also help us with the Yimei HaDin ahead.

**הַסְכֵּ֤ת | וּשְׁמַע֙ Intensely Listen Yisrael (27:9) – Maran HaRav Schachter**  would stress the idea that the language of Haskes is used here because there is a unique aspect to this Bris. This second Beris is not that of a group of individuals – it is the alliance of a nation that carries responsibilities not only for today but for subsequent generations. It is the Bris of Areivus which requires all of us to brush up on our Torah and the study of the rest of the nation in order to make sure that we are all able to keep our places in Torah life correctly.

**הַסְכֵּ֤ת | וּשְׁמַע֙ יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל  Imagine and hear (27:9) - Sforno** explains that the words Haskeis refers to making a picture in the mind and Shema refers to contemplation. When you can do both, you will undoubtedly hear the voice of Hashem. **Rav Wolbe** explained that picturing Torah concepts in our mind can help us fulfill Mitzvos. By picturing the pillar of fire illuminating the night or the 90 donkeys surrounding the people at Yetzias Mitzrayim as they were led by Moshe and Aharon is not merely fulfilling a specific Mitzva, it is an essential part of our Emunah. Picturing Hashem declared as king makes it easier to accept Him on Rosh Hashana as Melech Al Kol HaAretz.

**אֵ֠לֶּה יַֽעַמְד֞וּ לְבָרֵ֤ךְ אֶת־הָעָם֙ עַל־הַ֣ר גְּרִזִּ֔ים Har Grizim and Har Eival (27:12)** - Why do we make 6 tribes the “blessed” ones and 6 others as the cursed? **Rav Belsky**  explained that we do not do this. Instead, we speak of different ways that we relate to Hashem, one is through Ahava and another is through Yirah. **The Ramban** explains that love is the source of Mitzvos Aseh and Yirah of the Mitzvos Lo Taaseh. Naturally there are things that rise up like a mountain as Ahava (there are high points in Ahava) and others that rush like Yirah like the Yam Suf.

**אָר֗וּר אֲשֶׁ֧ר לֹֽא־יָקִ֛ים אֶת־דִּבְרֵ֥י הַתּוֹרָֽה־הַזֹּ֖את** **Cursed be he who does not uphold the Torah (27:26)** – The Yirushalmi (Sotah 7:4) notes that one who did everything and did not support Talmidei Chachamim is included in the Arur. **Rav Chaim Brim**  quotes Rav Yechezkel Abramsky who noted that once he came to London he was involved with major opportunities to lead a Jewish community but was uncomfortable not having a Talmid Chacham to support. Once he found someone “worthy” he jumped at the opportunity and would not let it go.

**אָר֗וּר אֲשֶׁ֧ר לֹֽא־יָקִ֛ים אֶת־דִּבְרֵ֥י הַתּוֹרָֽה־הַזֹּ֖את Cursed be he who does not uphold the Torah (27:26)** - The Yirushalmi (Sotah 7:4) explains that this Possuk refers to someone who COULD support Torah institutions and does not do so. The **Chofetz Chaim** noted that there is a famous Possuk “Eitz Chaim He L’Machazikim Bah” - The Torah is a source of life to those who uphold her”. He aked why we note that it says “uphold” and not those who support? He answered that those who uphold the Torah are also upheld by the Torah. If we merely noted support for Torah it would imply a certain distance between the donor and the Torah.

**וְהָיָ֗ה אִם־שָׁמ֤וֹעַ תִּשְׁמַע֙** **And it will be when you choose to listen to all the Mitzvos of Hashem (28:1**) – How can one be expected to keep EVERY single mitzvah in order to receive Beracha and to avoid Klala? **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein**  suggests that the answer is based in the responsibility that arises when one is given the opportunity and the potential to follow all of the mitzvos. When we can, we must do our utmost to see to it that we do – do our best to keep the Mitzvos in the best way possible.

**וְיָֽרְא֖וּ מִמֶּֽךָּ** **And the nations of the world shall see that the name of Hashem is upon you and they will fear you (28:10)** – The Talmud (Megillah 16b) quotes Rav Eliezer HaGadol who notes that this refers to the Tefillin on the head. **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah**  explains that while the Tefillin on the arm is a bind to the heart – a Deveikus between us and Hashem, the Shel Rosh is a sign of Yirah. For we are the only nation capable of relating to Hashem and knowing Him through the emotion of Simcha. The nations of the world can only understand the Yirah aspect of this association.

**וְיָֽרְא֖וּ מִמֶּֽךָּ And the nations of the world will see that the name of Hashem is upon you and they will fear from you (28:10)** - The **Rambam** notes that this will be learned by the nations of the world when they see that we are doing as Hashem does. **Rav Schachter** would regularly remind us that when we act in the manner that a Tzelem Elokim is supposed to, then V’Yaru Mimeka, the nations of the world will learn how to also act with a Yiras Shomayim having learned this from watching us (mimeka – from us that is from watching us).

**וְרָאוּ֙ כָּל־עַמֵּ֣י הָאָ֔רֶץ All of the nations will see the name of Hashem upon you and they will fear you (28:10)** - The Gemara notes that this refers to the Tefillin on the head (Berachos 6a). Why have so many put Tefillin and not achieved this sense of reverence? **Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev** explains that the Gemara does not say that they will revere the tefillin ON the head but rather the tefillin IN the head. Only when the ideas have been incorporated into the person’s mind can one achieve the reverence of other people. **Rav Dr. Twerski**  added that our mission to the nations of the world is to set an example of spiritual life and merit reverence. This can only be attained when the Tefillin are in the head.

**לְרֹאשׁ֙ וְלֹ֣א לְזָנָ֔ב**  **And Hashem will make you into a head and not a tail and you will only rise and not fall when you listen to Hashem (28:13)** **– The Mekubal Rav Meir Bikiyiim** asks why the Torah repeats the same idea with different metaphors? He explains that the metaphors are not the same. There are times when a cat’s tail is higher and raised above the animal’s head. At the same time, there are times that an animal lowers it head but during that time the animal’s head does not become its tail. Not everyone on top is leading but woe to the head that follows its tail. The only way to guarantee that one’s head is on top and leading the way is listening to the Mitzvos of Hashem.

**לְרֹאשׁ֙ וְלֹ֣א לְזָנָ֔ב  And Hashem shall place you as a head and not as a tail (28:13) - Rav Pam** noted that the antidote to the Tochcha is to have higher aspirations in life. How is one to achieve that? It begins, says Rav Pam, with the realization that we are a head and not a tail. We need to lead and not follow the fashions of the world around us. “Must Haves” of today become the dust-heaps of tomorrow.

**וְהָיָ֗ה אִם־לֹ֤א תִשְׁמַע֙ If you do not listen (28:15)** - **The Ahavas Torah (Rav Shlomo of Krashnov)** points out that we read the Tochacha in a low voice because ע”פ סוד, the Kelalos are really Berachos. When we tell secrets (סוד) we whisper them rather than saying them out loud.

**ובאו עליך כל הקללות האלה והשיגוךThese curses shall all come onto you and catch you (28:15)** - When the Berachos are offered in the Parsha, the word for catching (“V’Heeseegucha”) is spelled incomplete. Only when the word is introduced in the context of the curses does it appear complete. Why? The **Shach** explains that had the Berachos all been actualized at once, man would be overwhelmed and not appreciate each one. Thus, man is blessed to not get each one at the same time as the other so that we can feel the full effect of each of the Berachos. When it comes to the curses, their coming all at the same time might help some of them to cancel one another and create a bubble from within which, we can survive their torture. **Rabbeinu Bachaya** adds that the Possuk is written full in order to show that Hashem is fully there with us when we suffer. (he adds that the possuk begins with a vav and ends with a Chaf hinting to the name of Hashem =26).

**וּבָ֧אוּ עָלֶ֛יךָ כָּל־הַקְּלָל֥וֹת הָאֵ֖לֶּה וְהִשִּׂיגֽוּךָ These Berachos will come to you and they will catch you (28:15)** - It is interesting that the term “V’Hisigucha” is used. That term seems more applicable to curses catching up to you -- not berachos? **Sforno** explains that the intent is to refer to the fact that you will not even need to try to get the Beracha -- no Hishtadlus. **Rav Zeidel Epstein**  added that sometimes we do not realize that certain decisions in life are a means of Beracha and we might try to avoid these. To that the Torah tells us that the Berachos will still  catch up to us. Alternatively, the **Kotzker Rebbe**  offered the thought that “V’Hiseegucha” referred to comes from the word Hasaga -- question (as in Hasagos of the Raavad) and the Torah is giving us a challenge -- if He gives us these Berachos, why are we not fully Ovdei Hashem?

**וְהָיִ֖יתָ מְשֻׁגָּ֑ע You will go crazy from that which you will see (28:34) - Rav Mordechai Greenberg**  quoted the great **Rabbi Akiva Eiger** who once asked why it says V’HaEr Einenu B’Toraseicha. How can every Jew, even the ignorant, ask for the light of Torah? Rabbi Akiva Eiger answered that since the Talmidei Chachamim are the Einei HaEidah, the Beracha is that they should enlighten us through your Torah. Ergo, the curse of the Tochacha is to have supposed Talmidei Chachamim who lead us astray -- we will go crazy from watching them and learning from them.

**תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחהBecause you didn’t serve Hashem through Simcha and goodness of heart and abundance (28:47)** - The Torah does not seem to want us to be opposed to life and the joy in it. In fact, it seems that a lack of Simcha is a reason for Galus. **Rav Shlomo Aviner**  explains that the Torah is highlighting a critical message about Mitzva observance in connection to life. Rav Aviner notes that it is not Hashem’s will for us to “do” Mitzvos but rather to “live” them. When Mitzva observance is opportunity and not obligation, we come to get the best out of life. As an example he describes the spouse who tells his or her spouse that s/he will “give” anything the spouse wants but that s/he does so because “that’s my obligation”. Clearly, the fulfilling of marital opportunity does not foster close connection or bond. Rather, when we try to connect to Hashem’s way of wanting us to use His world, and attempt to relate to it, we are, in turn relating to Him as well and this is the source of beracha and the end of all curse. **Rav Elazar M. Teitz**  regularly references the comments of **Rav Moshe Feinstein**  who noted that many of the religious, ideological problems our generation faces came from the declaration made from our forebearers that “Es iz Shver Tsu Zein A Yid” which often leaves the next generation to curse it and walk away. **Rav Schachter**  often added to the general issue from the Rambam at the end of Hilchos Lulav that it is important to realize the chance we get to get closer to Hashem through doing Mitzvos and not to take doing them simply or by rote.

**תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלקיך בשמחה Because you didn’t serve Hashem with Simcha (28:47**) – Why is the Simcha so critical in Mitzva observance? **Rav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz**  explained that the Simcha discussed here is not an added feature in the human experience. Rather, within each moment of daily living there is a Chiyuv to live it fully and contently – this is the concept of Simcha. When it is missing, there is an aspect of man’s understanding of Avodas Hashem that is missing as well. And, therefore it cannot be mixed with another aspect of Simcha since to do so would prevent a person from being fully present in his current experience which holds him back from the appreciation of Hashem’s presence in that moment. If we have it, we’ve got it all. If we don’t we’ve got nothing.

**תַּ֗חַת אֲשֶׁ֤ר לֹֽא־עָבַ֨דְתָּ֙ אֶת־ה אֱלֹקיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָ֖ה וּבְט֣וּב לֵבָ֑ב  Since you didn’t serve Hashem with Joy (28:47)** - Why would we be punished for performance of mitzvos without simcha. Is simcha that important to the fulfillment of mitzvos that not having simcha warrants horrible punishment? **Rav Chaim Volozhiner** suggests that the Torah is not addressing the simcha that goes into the performance of a specific mitzvah, but rather our general attitude towards mitzvos. If our general approach to mitzvos is that they are a burden, rather than something enriching, then we are worthy of punishment. **The Kotzker Rebbe** takes this in a different direction and suggests that the Torah is not stating this as a punishment, but rather a reality. If we observe mitzvos and see them as a burden, our observance will never last. Our observance has to be infused with simcha, because if not, we can end up on a path where our actions truly deserve punishment.

**והשיבך ה' מצרים באניותHashem will return you to Egypt in boats (28:68) - Rashi** explains that this refers to boats in captivity. What is Rashi adding? And why does he not explain the boat concept when we first encounter the word in regard to the tribe of Zevulun in VaYechi? And who cares how Hashem returns us to the slavery in Egypt -- boat or walking? **The Lubavitcher Rebbe** explained that the concept of the boat is confining. When one is tied to the boat his choices are limited which allows the torture to commence earlier when the captive realizes that his choices are limited between death and slavery and he is not in control to do anything about it.

**והשיבך ה' מצרים באניות And Hashem shall return you to Egypt in boats (28:68)** – Why the stress on the boats specifically? **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**  cites a Midrash in Eicha Rabba (4:20) which highlights the episode of the attempt of Pharaoh Necho to sail into the land of Israel to help the Jews against their Babylonian invaders. Hashem had the bodies of the Egyptians who had drowned in the Yam Suf rise to the surface and the Egyptian naval officers identified the bodies as Egyptians who had died by the “hand” of the Jews. Upon learning of the discovery, the navy stated that “if this is what the people did to us, why are we going to help them?” They then turned and went back to Egypt. This, says Rav Chaim, is the curse of the boats. It reminds the Egyptians to refuse to come to Jewish aid.

**והתמכרתם לעבדים ולשפחות ואין קונהAnd you will be sold into slaves and maidservants and none will buy (28:68) - Rav Shlomo Kahanneman**  noted that while there are words of consolation and return after the Tochacha in Vayikra there are none here. The reason, he explained, was that the first Tochacha was for the Tzibbur and this one is to the individual. There is no guarantee of salvation for the individual -- the comfort is in the person’s turn to the Tzibbur. He added that the fact that no one else wants us to be absorbed into them will make sure that we remain for eternity -- but only as a nation. Unfortunately, we do find some individuals who can be splintered off and purchased by other nations.

**אֵ֩לֶּה֩ דִבְרֵ֨י הַבְּרִ֜ית These are the words of the Bris (28:69) - Rashi** notes that Nitzavim is next to the Tochacha since when they heard the 100-2 klalos aside from the 49 in Bechukosai they were scared and didn’t think they could withstand it. Moshe consoled them by reminding them that they were still standing. But why does Rashi present the number as 100-2 instead of 98? And what about the curses that are not written but referenced here? And why did THIS Tochacha bring out the reaction that it did instead of the earlier one? **Rav Dovid Lau quoted his grandfather Rav Yitzchak Yedidya Franke**l who explained that in Bechokosai, there are two Pesukim of Nechama at the end (26:44-45). That is why Rashi phrases it as 100-2. The 2 refers to the two pesukim of Nechama that are missing and because the nechama was missing, that is why the Jewish people had such a bad reaction.

**עַ֖ד הַיּ֥וֹם הַזֶּֽה: Hashem didn’t give you the heart to know...until today (29:3) - Rav Dovid Feinstein** highlighted that Moshe’s point here was to explain and console the people that their inability to fully undestand was not their fault. However, with their new abilities, Hashem was telling them that henceforth, they WOULD know and WOULD be responsible forever more.

**לֵב֙ לָדַ֔עַת וְעֵינַ֥יִם לִרְא֖וֹת Hashem didn’t give you a heart to know and eyes to see (29:3)** - **Rashi** explains that people do not fully get the words of their teacher until 40 years later. **Rav Neriah**  explained that there is a level of understanding called sight beyond sight. After all, when we consider the generation led by Moshe and Aharon who were shown so much and still, they commented on needing the 40 years to really understand...it proves the point!

**Haftara:**

**לֹֽא־יִֽהְיֶה־לָּ֨ךְ ע֚וֹד הַשֶּׁ֙מֶשׁ֙ לְא֣וֹר יוֹמָ֔ם** **The sun will no longer be your light during the day and for brightness the moon will no longer give you light (Yeshayahu 60:19) – Rav Schwab**  explained that the message here could be figurative too. In the days of Moshiach, the Jewish nation will become more “enlightened” to Hashem’s presence in this world. This will mean no more doubts about Hashem – no need to look to the sun in order to remember His impact – that knowledge will be the nation’s glory and pride in the eyes of the rest of the world.

**כִּֽי־הִנֵּ֚ה הַחֹ֙שֶׁךְ֙ יְכַסֶּה־אֶ֔רֶץ For behold Darkness may cover the earth (Yeshayahu 60:2) - Rav Dovid Feinstein**  explained that darkness here refers to the denial of Hashem’s power believing instead in the forces of nature. Chazal tell us that before the coming of Moshiach the leaders of the world will become heretics. Still, Hashem will give us the spiritual strength to withstand false ideas. It will be our faith that will prevail.

**ועמך כולם צדיקים And your nation are all Tzadikim, they shall inherit the land forever (Yeshayahu 60:21)** – We recall this possuk perhaps most famously from the introduction to Pirkei Avos as a proof text to the claim that all of the Bnei Yisrael have a share in the world to come. **Rav Yisrael Meir Lau**  commented that the land referenced here is a reference to the world to come. The Mishna is pointing out to us that whomever put himself as part of our nation, in whatever way it is -- merits a share in the world to come. However, we need to remember that the portions are not always equal. Portion sizes and quality are dependent on how the person lives a life and merits the reward at the end.

**נֵ֧צֶר מַטָּעַ֛י (כתיב מַטָּעַ֛ו) מַֽעֲשֵׂ֥ה יָדַ֖י לְהִתְפָּאֵֽר A branch of my planting the work of my hands to be proud of (Yeshayahu 60:21)** - We are familiar with this Possuk as it is the prooftext to the introduction to Pirkei Avos which tells us that every Jew has a share in the world to come. **Rav Eliyahu Lopian** was quick to note that the Mishna does not say “in” but rather “to” the world to come. The Novi explains that each Jewih soul has been crafted with the handiwork and hardware to be able to get to the world to come. Whether we are worthy or not will depend if we know how to run the program properly throughout our lives.

**בְּעִתָּ֥הּ אֲחִישֶֽׁנָּה In its time I shall hasten it (Yeshayahu 60:22)** - The final two words of the Haftara seem to be contradictory. How do we reconcile them? **Rav Pam**  cited the Gemara that notes that it depends on our merit. If we deserve it, it will come faster otherwise it will come at its appointed time. Rav Pam added that there are situations where we wait for something to happen. Yet, once it happens, it can still take a while to be fully realized. Thus, the request-- to make it come faster and to do so fully.

**בְּעִתָּ֥הּ אֲחִישֶֽׁנָּה In its time, I will hasten it (Yeshaya 60:22)** – The commentaries on Tanach understand the Novi to be referring to the same period in time while the Gemara (Sanhedrin 98a) seems to speak of a dual possibility – if they are worthy then it will be sped up. If not, in its time. How to explain the contradictory approaches? **Rav Avraham Rivlin**  noted that the apparent difference comes down to the roles that men play in determining the time of the Geulah. Assuming that man deserves it and can, Nevuah Nezeila (a big concept in the writings and Sichot of Rav Rivlin) allows for a framing of a particular Nevuah. Thus, what may need to be read one way on the surface can be interpreted another way based on man’s deserving nature.