Points to Ponder

Bechukosai 5779

**אִם־בְּחֻקֹּתַ֖י תֵּלֵ֑כוּ  If you walk in my Chukim (26:3)** - **Rashi** famously notes that the intent here is in the intense study of Torah. How does he derive this idea**? Rav Shmuel Rozovsky ztl.** suggested that the stress on the concept of movement refers to moving onwards and upwards and that type of movement only happens when one dwells and toils in Torah. **Rav Don Segel Shlita** adds that the movement implied here is the movement one makes when he moves from this world to the next and that movement happens only in the value of Ameilus.

**וִֽישַׁבְתֶּ֥ם לָבֶ֖טַח בְּאַרְצְכֶֽם And you will dwell peacefully in the land..I shall send peace in the land (26:5-6)** - Why does Hashem add the second promise. Once we dwell there in peace, what does the next blessing come to add? **Rav Chaim Kanievsky Shlita** explains that when one follows the Torah, Hashem promises that there will be no need to fear an impending attack. However, even if a battle breaks out WITHOUT the angst of impending war, Hashem STILL promises that there will be peace (in other words, there will be no anticipatory anxiety and no anxiety itself).

**וְנָֽתַתִּ֥י מִשְׁכָּנִ֖י בְּתֽוֹכְכֶ֑ם And I will place my Mishkan among you and my soul shall not be sickened by you (26:11**) - what is the additional Beracha? If Hashem lives there isn’t it obvious that He is not disgusted with us? **Rav Chaim Feinstein Shlita** notes that Shlomo HaMelech (Mishlei 25:17) explains that even among friends, it is possible to have “too much of a good thing.” Therefore, the Beracha is clear -- Hashem will not be subjected to the same with us. He will be able to be present with us permanently and not suffer from the familiarity itch and bore.

 **וְאִם־תֵּֽלְכ֤וּ עִמִּי֙ קֶ֔רִי If you will proceed with me Keri (26:21)** - Rashi cites Menachem Ibn Saruk who notes that the word Keri comes from the concept of withholding. In other words, notes Rav Shlomo Wolbe ztl., the soul of the Jew inherently desires to be close to Hashem and to do His will. He has to work extra hard to go in the other direction. Rav Wolbe added that he observed this phenomenon beginning with the 6 day war and into the Yom Kippur war -- that people just wanted to get close to Hashem and sought Him wherever they could.

**וַֽאֲכַלְתֶּ֖ם בְּשַׂ֣ר בְּנֵיכֶ֑ם And you will consume the flesh of your children (26:29) - The Chazon Ish** pointed out that it is not the familial distance nor the poverty that is the worst part of this curse. It is the complete and total loss of basic humanity that leads one to act like an animal that is the ultimate curse of not listening to the word of Hashem.

**אַף גַּם־זֹאת בִּֽהְיוֹתָ֞ם בְּאֶ֣רֶץ אֹֽיְבֵיהֶ֗ם לֹֽא־מְאַסְתִּ֤ים וְלֹֽא־גְעַלְתִּים֙ לְכַלֹּתָ֔ם And with all this I have not been disgusted by them to wipe them out (26:44)** - The Yalkut Shimoni asks what the point of not having been spit out of the land is, if everything has been taken away from the people living there? The Yalkut answers that in the end, the Sefer Torah is still with the people. **Rav Shaul Yisraeli ztl.** pointed out that after the Holocaust we learned a costly lesson -- that while there were periods in time that the world claimed a better biblical testament, or a more ethical method of behavior - it became apparent that the truth is with us. If we follow the Chukim of Hashem -- and live by the word that created Shomayim and Aretz -- we will endure. Those chukim are our Torah.

**וְכָל־מַעְשַׂ֤ר בָּקָר֙ וָצֹ֔אן  All of the Maaser from cattle and sheep (27:32)** - Why do we have the extra word Maaser mentioned in the Possuk? **Rav Schachter Shlita** would often note the comment of the **Netziv** who explains that without the word we would have assumed that the Mitzva of Maaser Beheima only applies if the animal passed under the staff. Otherwise, the rules of maaser Beheima would not apply. Rav Schachter would note that this is in conflict with that which they quote in the name of the **Vilna Gaon** that a Mitzva is a commandment --it is a Mitzva whether the opportunity presents itself or not. Rav Schachter would add that the concept of a Mitzva Kiyumis would not exist based on this Hava Amina. Either way, the extra word “Maaser” reminds us that we have an obligation to separate Maaser Beheima and the proper process of doing so is the passing of the animals under the staff of the owner and designating every tenth to Hashem.

 **Haftara: בָּר֣וּךְ הַגֶּ֔בֶר אֲשֶׁ֥ר יִבְטַ֖ח Blessed is the person who puts his trust in Hashem, for then Hashem is his security (Yirmiyahu 17:7) - Metzudos Dovid** explains that the more one relies on Hashem and discounts the tenuous help of mortal man, the more that Hashem comes to his assistance**. Rav Pam ztl.** once commented to a Talmid Chacham facing a particular challenge who spoke out the sugya of Bitachon with Rav Pam that while the sugya is a good topic for a shiur, but the definition of Bitachon is that we are in the hands of Hashem and whatever He does for us is ultimately for the best. This approach grants the person Menuchas HaNefesh which helps mitigate frustration and anger.