

Points to Ponder
Hazine 5777

The deeds of the mighty rock are perfect and just (32:4) – what does this mean? **Rav Schachter Shlita** pointed out that usually when one metes out justice, it cannot take society and the collateral damage into account. However, when it comes to Hashem, he is able to take everything into consideration and Ein Avel - it never ruins His plan.

Recall the days of old (32:7) – When we read of the Yimos Olam the recollection is in the singular language. However in the years of each generation it is in the plural. Why? **Rav Yehonasan David Shlita** suggested that when it comes to the beginning of time, the Mishna suggests that you can only explain it to a single student. But the history of generation to generations can be studied by the masses together.

You were unmindful of the rock who bore you and forgot Hashem who sustains you (32:18) – **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl.** explained that there are 2 processes of forgetfulness that lead to sin. In Parshas Eikev the forgetfulness is active as the person tries to select a different Avodah Zara instead of Hashem. The forgetfulness described in Parashat Ha'azinu is of a different type. Here, the forgetfulness comes from awareness of God's existence, but not follow through with the ramifications of this knowledge. The person does not allow his knowledge of God's existence to influence his lifestyle or his day-to-day activities. "And Yeshurun grew fat." This draws his attention away from any sort of spiritual reality – "and he kicked." This person knows that God exists – perhaps he would even profess to believe in Him – but his life is nevertheless considered one of "sacrificing to demons, non-gods." He serves success and prosperity, setting aside no time for developing a spiritual personality. In short, this is modern man's Avodah Zara.

They are a generation of reversals (32:20) – Although the simple meaning of the possuk is in the negative, **Rav Yaakov Bender Shlita** told the story of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ztl. who responded to an insolent comment toward Rav Kook ztl. about Shmittah by explaining that there will be a generation in the future whose upbringing is not to be the rejection of Torah and Mitzvos which was the cornerstone of the secularist movement. Sure enough, it came to be – the movement to be Shomer Shmittah K'Halacha is a proud declaration throughout Eretz Yisrael.

They have caused me to seem jealous [as they pursue] non-gods, they have angered me with their nonsense, and I will make them jealous with a non-people, I will make them angry with a foolish nation (32:21) – **Ramban** explains that the reference to the nation is the Kasdim. What gave them the unique opportunity to ruin the Jewish people? **Rav Zevulun Charlop Shlita** explained that they were a rootless people whose style was to steal the style of the people in whose midst they lived. **Rav Yaakov Neuberger Shlita** added that this nation and its style were created by Hashem specifically to go after a nation that is uninterested in its own grand legacy.

In the midst of this day (32:48) – **Rashi** notes that the phrase B'Etzem HaYom appears three times in the Torah. Each time it was to show that no one could stop it. This time it would be the Bnei Yisrael who might try to stop the death of Moshe. How would they think to be successful? **Rav Chaim Shmuellevitz ztl.** opines that it would be through their Tefillos that they would try to stop the decree. **The Brisker Rav ztl.** suggested that by simply blocking his ascent up the mountain, they could thwart death since Moshe was to ascend the mountain in order to pass.

And die on the mountain you are ascending (32:50) – Rashi comments that this death would be similar to the death of Aharon which Moshe so desired. What was so special about the death? **Rav Nebenzahl Shlita** explained that the actual entire death was a fulfillment of Mitzvos. Aharon was commanded to stretch his hands, close his eyes etc. Moshe too, would fulfill the words in his death by ascending the mountain and following the words. (A similar thought is expressed in the name of the Ponovezher Rav)