Points to Ponder

Ki Savo 5782

**11:00-2 pm   AI Sunday Funday program @ AI/Gan Yonina**

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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).

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Haftara**

**כִּֽי־הִנֵּ֚ה הַחֹ֙שֶׁךְ֙ יְכַסֶּה־אֶ֔רֶץ For behold darkness may cover the earth (Yeshayahu 60:2) - Rav Dovid Feinstein** explained that darkness is the power of denial that Hashem has the ultimate power over the world believing instead that the forces of nature will always prevail. Chazal tell us that before Moshiach comes, the rulers of the world will become heretical. Nevertheless, Hashem assured Klal Yisrael that He will give us the spiritual strength to withstand the false ideas that surround us. Our faith will prevail and will illuminate the world.