

Points to Ponder  
Ki Sisa/Parah 5777

**And there will not be a plague when they are counted (30:12)** – Rav Shlomo Wolbe ztl. explains that normally the counting of Bnei Yisrael leads to a plague or is the means of identifying the aftereffects therein. Normally, this is the case because we are taking a nation of infinite possibilities and making their influence and destiny, finite.

**For it is a sign between me and them to know (32:12)**- What is the knowing process in regard to Shabbos? Rav Nissan Alpert ztl. explained that there is no pointing to something and stating that this is Shabbos. Nothing specific is Shabbos. Shabbos is declared by us and it requires us to know that it is special.

**Go down because your nation has become corrupt (32:7)** – Why is the nation all of a sudden referred to as Moshe's and not Hashem's? Rashi tells us that the nation here refers to the Eirev Rav. Rav Schachter Shlita noted in the name of the Gra that in the generation of Moshiach there will be more trouble from the Eirev Rav. Rav Schachter noted that today's Eirev Rav are those who are Migaleh Torah Shelo K'Halacha. Rav Schachter would remind us often that the Rambam's Hilchos Mamrim begins with a respect for the authority contained in the Halachic process.

**Behold they are Ksheh Oref (32:9)**- The term literally means that they are stiff necked. What does their neck condition have to do with their status? Rav Aharon Soloveitchik ztl. explained that the term refers not to a sense of stubbornness but rather narrow-mindedness – a limited sense of vision. Bnei Yisrael could not see how their survival was going to be possible without Moshe. Had they simply turned their necks around, they would have seen Har Sinai and recalled the experience and known that they could withstand any challenge.

**The Luchos were creations of Hashem and the writing, the writing of Hashem imposed on the Luchos (32:15)** – Why mention the grandeur of the Luchos now and not when they were given to Moshe? The Shemen Hatov suggests that prior to destroying something, one needs to contemplate the loss. Once destroying, one really appreciates that which he beholds and is about to lose. At the same time, despite the preciousness, Moshe saw he needed to destroy them and did not hesitate to do so – hence the Torah's stress on their grandeur in order to show us the greatness of the decision to destroy them.

**Who is for Hashem should come to me and the entire tribe of Levi gathered around him (32:26)** – There were many others who were not idol worshippers. Why did Shevet Levi serve as the only ones who came forward? Rav Yitzchak Adlerstein Shlita suggested that Moshe only wanted the elite because the mission of this group was to be fraught with danger. At the same time, while many were qualified, Moshe feared anyone having anything that could be mislabeled as ulterior motives, in killing a fellow Jew. Therefore, he only took from Levi.

**For based on these things I erected a covenant with the Jewish people (34:27)** – The Talmud tells us that "These words" refers to the Torah She'Bal Peh. Rav Shaul Yisraeli ztl. explained that in regard to Torah SheB'Ksav, it can be regaled and placed into an ark and left alone in an honored place. However, the only place for Torah She'Baal Peh is inside each and every person committed to it. Torah She'Baal Peh regulates the entirety of a person's life. Therefore, the only Bris with Yisrael is the one each of us buys into--- Torah SheBaal Peh.

**Haftorah: Son of man! The house of Israel, as long as they lived on their own land, they defiled it by their way and by their misdeeds, like the uncleanness of a woman in the period of her separation was their way before Me. (Yechezkel 36:17)** – Why does the Novi refer to sins and misdeeds at the beginning of the Possuk and later – in the context of Niddah merely refer to the “way” of sin? **Rav Yaakov Krantz, famed Dubno Maggid** explains that there is a difference between a Derech and misdeeds. The Derech refers to premeditated thought, which although hidden from our fellow man is revealed to Hashem. Misdeeds are seen by all. Many Aveiros Bein adam L’Makom tend to be in thought while Bein Adam L’Chaveiro are always revealed. While Hashem knows of both types of Aveiros, and both defile the land, the Bein Adam L’Chavero – revealed actions lead to the galus.