Points to Ponder

Ki Sisa 5779

**For it is a sign between me and you (31:13) – Rashi** notes the ultimate proof of our relationship with Hashem is that Hashem gave us Shabbos and in order that the rest of the nations of the world should know that I am Hashem. Why should it matter what the nations know about our relationship with Hashem? We know and He knows – why the need for the publicity? **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum ztl.** explained that it is a de-facto position of the rest of the world to want to talk about us. They understand the concept of Am HaNivchar and revel when we do not seem to deserve or benefit from the title. That is what the Possuk comes to teach us here – if we make sure that our conversations and communications are indeed different from those of the nations of the world – when we carry ourselves as different and of a higher standard not because of obligation but rather because of who we are then the nations of the world will also get it – that we are different and aspire to more.

**Cheit HaEigel – Rav Schachter Shita** would remind us regularly that the Gemara notes that the point of the story of the Eigel was to teach Teshuva D’Rabbim. A similar comment is made about Dovid HaMelech and that the story with Batsheva was also to teach Teshuva D’Yachid. The episode is one of the 6 Zechiros and **Ramban** says that is a Mitzva to remember this every year—in order to teach the message of Teshuva D’Rabbim. Why don’t we read this with the same gusto of Parshas Zachor? **Mogen Avraham** answers that we do not want to draw attention to the embarrassment of Am Yisrael. However he suggests that it is a responsibility to remember the episode and according to Ramban, there is a special Kiyum during the Kriyas HaTorah of this fact.

**He gave Moshe when he was finished speaking to him (31:18)- Rashi** explains that this is written חסר to note that the relationship was still new like that of a Chosson and a Kallah – for Moshe had not mastered Torah as yet. The Midrash adds that in the end, Hashem gave it to Moshe as a gift. The Meforshim ask that if Torah was going to be a gift, why did Moshe have to sit over it for 40 day? **Chiddushei HaRim** explains that only through the hard work can someone actually really absorb the Torah.

**Go down quickly (32:7)** – When the story is repeated in Devarim (9:12) we also see that the word quickly is used. Why is it so important that Moshe go down quickly? **Rav Zaidel Epstein ztl.** notes that the timing of treatment often affects its ability to be effective. (The drug Tamiflu has to be administrated in the first 2 days of contracting the flu to be effective) If it is true for physical illness, it is true for spiritual illness too. Moshe was holding the vaccine for the spreading virus of the Eigel. He needed to administer it in order to be able to save the nation. That process begins with doing so in a timely manner.

**There is no sounds of victory or weakness just the sounds of voices (32:18)** – Responding to someone who complained to **Dayan Weiss ztl.** about the purposelessness of protests, he responded that Moshe didn’t hear voices of victory or defeat. One can infer that had Moshe at least heard people protest he would not have needed to break the Luchos to show the people the error of their ways.

**You will see my back but not my front (33:22)** – Didn’t Hashem just tell us that He would speak with Moshe face to face? Which is it? **Rav Yaakov Medan Shlita** suggests that the difference was whether Moshe was in the camp or whether he was alone. Prior to Cheit HaEigel (and when Moshe was not in the camp) Hashem was easy to reach. Bnei Yisrael experienced divine revelation easily and somewhat effortlessly. After the Cheit HaEigel they were on a lower level and had to run after Hashem in order to seek Him. This is the intent of the Possuk here – you can try to catch me but you will need to work hard and run to catch even the back glimpses.

**No one shall desire your land (34:24)** – This is not the first mention of the Mitzva of Aliyah L’Regel. Why does the Torah wat until now to tell us of the promise that no one will desire your land? **Rav Yonasan David Shlita** explains that in the same way that Ibn Ezra notes that the prohibition of Lo Tachmod means that it will not be within the realm of expectation to desire what does not belong to another, Hashem promises that as a result of the spiritual searching of all of the people rising to the occasion of Aliyah L’Regel and the raising of the spiritual sense that such an action will bring throughout the land, the non-Jewish nations will not be able to relate to the beauty and will not desire the land.

**Haftara – They should give us 2 bulls (I Kings 18:24)** – Why does he use the word שנים instead of the more correct שני פרים**? Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** explains that Eliyahu wanted the bulls to be exactly the same – as the Midrash notes – they were to be a set of twins from the same mother raised in the same manner in order for the proof of the glory of Hashem to be complete. Remember, the bull that was to be used by the prophets of Baal was so distraught, it did not want to go until Eliyahu convinced it that it too, was part of the Kiddush Hashem to be made at Har HaCarmel.