Points to Ponder

Ki Sisa/Parah 5781

**וְנָֽתַתָּ֣ אֹת֗וֹ בֵּֽין־אֹ֤הֶל מוֹעֵד֙ וּבֵ֣ין הַמִּזְבֵּ֔חַ Kiyor (30:18)** - Why is the Kiyor placed between the Mizbeiach and the Ohel Moed. Wouldn’t it have been better to be BEFORE the Mizbeiach? The **Shem Mi Shmuel** explains that there is a critical lesson here -- that when a person sins, s/he needs to go to a holy place and from there to do Teshuva. In other words, a person should not say “I cannot achieve this” but rather needs to aspire by seeing what there is to aspire to, and then to achieve it first through atonement and then through post sin growth.

**אַ֥ךְ אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַ֖י תִּשְׁמֹ֑רוּ Just keep my Shabbos..Bnei Yisrael will keep the Shabbos (31:13)** - Why is the Shmira concept mentioned twice? **Or HaChaim** points out that the second Shmira is anticipation. **Rav Aryeh Leibowitz Shlita** explained that we have a special responsibility to anticipate Shabbos and to look forward to it every day of the week.

**לֶךְ־רֵ֕ד Go down quickly (32:7)** - Why did Hashem insist that Moshe go down so quickly? **Rav Zeidel Epstein ztl.** explained that like a medical treatment, every moment makes a difference. The faster Moshe got to the people, the less damage the Eigel episode would affect the people.

**וְהַמִּכְתָּ֗ב מִכְתַּ֤ב אֱלֹהִים֙ ה֔וּא חָר֖וּת עַל־הַלֻּחֹֽת The writing is the writing of Hashem on the Luchos (32:16) -** Why is the beauty of the Luchos identified only at the time they were broken? The **Shemen Hatov** explains that sometimes we only appreciate the great things when they are laid to waste. **Rav Frand Shlita** added that we need to do that with our youth and our elders --- we need to appreciate them while we still have them.

**ק֣וֹל עַנּ֔וֹת אָֽנֹכִ֖י שֹׁמֵֽעַ I only hear the noise of rebellion (32:8)** - What did Moshe mean? **Rav Elyashiv ztl.** explained that when everyone is only thinking about himself or herself it causes massive damage to the group. He added that when we just react without thought, this is always damaging.

**וְלֹֽא־יַחְמֹ֥ד אִישׁ֙ אֶת־אַרְצְךָ֔ בַּֽעֲלֹֽתְךָ֗ No one will desire your land when you go to see Hashem (34:24) - Rav Meir Shapiro ztl.** explained that the trip of Aliya L’regel cannot be connected to the physical positive and negative calculations. Instead, the trip needs to be considered from the perspective of the spiritual beauty and effect.

**כְּתָב־לְךָ֖ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֑לֶּה  Write these things down (34:27)** - The Gemara (Gitin 60a) uses this possuk to highlight the fact that there will be both a written and an oral Torah. While the written Torah was made available to the nations of the world in the time of Yehoshua, the Torah She’Baal Peh was not. The same *possuk* also implies that the written Torah should not be recited from memory, rather it should only be read from a *sefer*. Similarly, the oral Torah may not be read from a *sefer* and must be recited by heart. The ***baalei haTosafos*** (*[Temurah](https://www.sefaria.org/Temurah.14b?lang=he-en&utm_source=torahweb.org&utm_medium=sefaria_linker)* [14b](https://www.sefaria.org/Temurah.14b?lang=he-en&utm_source=torahweb.org&utm_medium=sefaria_linker)) ask why we say so many sections of the Torah by heart? **Tosafos** explains that this *halacha* only applies to a *ba'al koreh*, who may not recite *kerias haTorah* by heart when he is reading on behalf of the *tzibbur*. What about the writing of the Torah SheBaal Peh? Why are we allowed to write that down? **Rav Schachter Shlita** quoted from **Sefer Yereim**  who explains that the *Chachomim* never meant to say that one is violating an *aveira* if he teaches Torah *Shebaal Peh* to others from a written text. Rather the *Chachomim* were saying that the *mitzvah beshleimusa* of teaching Torah to others can only be fulfilled if you teach it orally. If one transmits Torah *Shebaal Peh* from a text he is only fulfilling the *mitzvah* in an incomplete manner. So when the *Chachomim* recorded the *Mishnayos* and the *Gemorah* to serve as the text for the later generations, no *aveira* was violated but it is only that we are fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *talmud* Torah *shelo beshleimusa*.

**Haftara (for Parshas Parah)**

**כַּצֹּ֖אן אָדָֽם** **This is what I shall seek for Bnei Yisrael I will make you as great as the sheep of man (Yechezkel 36:37-38) - Rav Yigal Ariel Shlita** explained that the land of Israel and even the cities (which have the people) are really only the shells that contain the potential for Kedusha. It is the combination of the two -- the nation and the land (symbolized by the people and the sheep) that reveal the true Kedusha of the land. Basing himself on the writings of Rav Kook, Rav Ariel explains that it is the combination of the individual and the group (man and sheep) that unite the ultimate kedusha of man on the land.