Points to Ponder

Re’eh 5780

**וְאִבַּדְתֶּ֣ם אֶת־שְׁמָ֔ם מִן־הַמָּק֖וֹם הַהֽוּא And you shall destroy its name from that place (12:3)** - Rashi says that this is a directive to call an Avoda Zara by a negative name**. The Brisker Rav ztl.** noted that this is a 2 step Mitzva -- using a nickname and making that nickname a negative one.

**רַ֣ק חֲזַ֗ק לְבִלְתִּי֙ אֲכֹ֣ל הַדָּ֔ם Just be strong not to eat blood (12:23)** - The Gemara (Chullin 142a) notes that this is an easy Mitzva since we do not like blood anyway. How come it needs strengthening if it is so easy to keep? **Rav Mattisyahu Solomon Shlita** explained that there are 2 aspects to observing Mitzvos. On the one hand we are involved in the performance of the Mitzva itself and at the same time we are rewarded for the Tircha, the efforts extended in the performance of the Mitzva. We do not know the reward of the former -- the Mitzva itself but we DO know and are rewarded for, the Tircha of the Mitzva and that is independent of price of the Mitzva.

**וְאֹת֥וֹ תַֽעֲבֹ֖דוּ And Him you shall serve (13:5)** - **Rashi** explains that you should serve Him in His Mikdash. **Ramban** (6:13) explains that you should serve Him with His Torah. We know how to serve Hashem in his Mikdash -- through Korbanos or its modern equivalent Tefillah. But what does serving Hashem through His Torah mean? **Rav Elya Svei ztl.** explained that when one is so absorbed in Torah that his whole existence is Torah, he is serving Hashem through his life -- a life of complete Torah.

**מַפְרֶ֣סֶת פַּרְסָ֗ה וְשֹׁסַ֤עַת שֶׁ֨סַע֙  Anything that has a split hoof and chews its cud (14:6)** - In discussing the case of the Zebu, **Rav Schachter Shlita**  noted that the gemara in Chullin relates a story that one of the Amoraim once ate an animal which he thought was kosher based on the Simanim given in the Torah, but later figured out it didn’t actually have the Simanim. **Rashi** writes that therefore one shouldn’t eat an animal based on the Simanim alone, and should only eat it if he has a mesorah that it’s kosher. The **Chochmas Adam** understands that this idea of Mesorah does not only apply to birds but to animals as well. An animal called a zebu was introduced to Israel during the Chazon Ish’s time which required little water, but gave milk like a cow. The **Chazon Ish** paskined that you can’t eat it based on the Chochmat Adam that we lacked a Mesorah for the animal. However, scientists  began to breed hybrids of Zibus and cows, and the gemara says that kosher animals can be bred with kosher animals but it’s physically impossible for them to breed with non-kosher animals. Thus, Zebus must be Kosher. too!  Rav Schachter explained that even though the Chochmas Adam  requires a Masorah to eat animals that have Simanim, in the case of Zebu, the mesorah of  “mating as a sign” meant that the Kashrut passed to the offspring, and the Masorah does, as well.

**כֹּ֧ל אֲשֶׁר־ל֛וֹ סְנַפִּ֥יר וְקַשְׂקֶ֖שֶׂת תֹּאכֵֽלוּ: Fins and scales (14:9)** - The Talmud notes that a father has a number of things he needs to teach his son. One is perhaps to teach him to swim. Why? **Rav Elyashiv ztl** explained that swimming teaches a person how to go against the tide allowing him not to be afraid of a lot of water. This, said Rav Elyashiv, is the intent of the Possuk concerning the fish. Just like fish have fins and scales that help them stem the tide, the Jewish nation has the Torah and the Mitzvos.

**לֶ֣חֶם עֹ֑נִי כִּ֣י בְחִפָּז֗וֹן יָצָ֨אתָ֙ מֵאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֔יִם Because you left Mitzrayim quickly (16:3) - Ramban** explains that Lechem Oni reminds us of the speed that we left Mitzrayim. **Rav Simcha Zissel Broide ztl.** explained that Lechem Oni refers to 2 things -- the fact that freedom came so fast that we did not have have time for the bread to rise and that in Egypt the people lived in EEnoi -- in distress and the bread highlighted that distress. This is hinted to in the Haggada when we note that Ha Lach Mah Anya Dee Achaclu B’Ara D’Mitzrayim.

**וְשָֽׂמַחְתָּ֞ You shall rejoice in your holiday (16:11) - Rashi** explains “If you bring joy to Mine – I’ll bring joy to yours″. That is, Hashem tells us that if you take care of “My″ people (the poor, the weak, those who are lacking) – I will bring joy to you and your family. **Mrs. Sivan Rahav Meir ShTchyt**. explained that in an age of pursuit of happiness, this is a revolutionary worldview: Hashem does not call upon us to look for joy in distant places or in materialistic accomplishments, titles and degrees, but rather – to understand that the real source of joy is in our rapport with others and in our attitude towards others. A revolution of joy.

**Haftara: וְרַ֖ב שְׁל֥וֹם בָּנָֽיִךְ All of your children will be students of Hashem and your children’s peace will be abundant (Yeshayahu 54:13) - Rav Pam ztl.** noted that the watchmen on the mountains play a significant role in Jewish history. At one point they were a stop gap of the king Yeravam to prevent Jews from going up to Yirushalayim. Yirmiyahu dreamed of a day when the same watchmen would actually ENCOUAGE the people to go to Yirushalayim. The difference will be from within the spiritual awakening of the people --- when the children will be students of Hashem.