

Hashem Elokim, you have begun to show your servant your greatness and your strong hand... (3:24) –

The Talmud (Berachos 32a) learns that one should first arrange his praises of Hashem and only afterwards – daven. What is the goal of this “soft talk” in front of Hashem? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** stressed the fact that when one asks for a favor from a friend, he does so because he THINKS the other can help him – not because he KNOWS. However, when one speaks to Hashem it is important to remember that Hashem CAN do anything. Therefore, establishing the praise is not for Hashem, it is a reminder to US as to where WE should direct our needs and to know that it is in His power to do them.

Do not add to that which I command to you (4:2) – Ironically these 2 Mitzvos (adding and taking away from the Mitzvos) seems to be repeated again in Parshas Reeh. Why? **The Vilna Gaon** explains that there is another repetition in Parshas Re'eh – that of Mitzvas Haomer. In that case, it is repeated in the singular after having initially been written in the plural. The Gra explains that the difference between singular and plural is that singular applies to the concept of an Am while plural is a chiyuv on each individual. **Rav Schachter Shlita** added that the same idea applies here – whether the Beis Din HaGadol (which would be a singular Lo Toseif) or a single individual were to add to the Torah it would be a violation of the rule of Baal Tosif. The Torah, by switching between singular and plural (which it does in other areas too) is teaching us that we can look at Torah rules (or even principles like the Tochacha) both as commandments to the individuals and to the community of Klal Yisrael as a whole.

And you shall guard your souls very well since you did see any image on the day that Hashem spoke to you from the midst of the fire on Har Chorev (4:15) – The first half of the possuk serves as the source for the need of a person to watch his or her health (See Berachos 32b) but how does that fit within the reason brought in the second half of the Possuk? **Rav Shimon Schwab ztl.** explained that the acceptance of the Torah was a completely spiritual experience that had a potential to damage the physical aspects of man (we find a similar idea in the Avoda of Yom Kippur where fires to heat the water of the Kohein Gadol were established). The Torah wants us to know that this was not a given at the time of Matan Torah. One needs to protect his/her health even now.

And you shall return to Hashem (4:30) – Rav Noach Weinberg ztl. was once asked how he was able to impact so many Baalei Teshuva if the great leaders of the previous generation were only able to impact a few. He answered by noting that there are certain beams that are so strong that they need to be lifted by cranes in order to have impact. However, once the weight is lifted by crane, they can be manipulated into place by a single human being. Rav Noach explained that there is a promise from Hashem that prior to the Geulah Klal Yisrael will do Teshuva. In prior generations, there was heavy lifting to do and thus the earlier geonim were able to impact a few. However, today we are facing greater opportunities given the Havtacha that gets the heavy lifting done.

From the heavens he made his voice heard in order to instruct you (4:36) – Rashi (in Parshas Yisro) uses this possuk in order to settle an apparent contradiction as to whether revelation took place Min HaShomayim or whether Hashem came down from Shomayim to reveal himself on Har Sinai. Using this Possuk, Rashi explains that His glory is in the heavens, while His fire and might are upon the land. **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl.** added that Rashi's explanation illustrates the paradoxical and seemingly impossible nature of the revelation at Sinai. On the one hand, had God remained in the heavens and not descended onto the mountain to convey the commandments to them, they could not have understood or absorbed anything at all. On the other hand, it was important that Am Yisrael understand

that God is transcendental, and altogether unlike the Egyptian gods to which they were accustomed. Therefore, a profound experience was needed in order to convey this complex message: "His fire and His might are upon the land."

The 7th day is Shabbos for Hashem (5:14) – The Gemara (Shabbos 12a) notes that one visiting the sick on Shabbos uses the phrase Shabbos Hee M'L'zok which implies that Shabbos itself is supposed to provide the healing. However, don't we find that Shabbos does not often provide the healing and, in fact, sometimes even creates the illness? **Rav Shimshon Dovid Pinkus ztl.** explains that there is an external aspect to illness and an internal one. The appearance of illness on Shabbos is really a "vochatiger" aspect of the day. It is not Shabbos. Shabbos (when observed in its purest form) and illness do not align.

And do not desire the wife of your friend or his home, field, servant or anything that your friend has (5:18) – How does the Torah figure to regulate an emotion? Citing **Ibn Ezra's** explanation in Parshas Yisro, **Rav Wolbe ztl.** explained that when one lives with the realization that whatever Hashem gives him is indeed his and what He does not give him is not supposed to be his, is part of the Bitachon that helps man not desire that which does not belong to him.

And you should teach them to your children and speak them when you sit in your home (6:7) – The source of man's responsibility to teach his children Torah and also to learn himself, is based in this Possuk (See Rambam Talmud Torah 1:1-4). Why does the Torah stress the teaching of Torah before the study of Torah itself? Moreover, the source for man's obligation to study himself only appears in the book of Yehoshua. Why the stress on the teaching with the need to learn only ancillary? **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** explained that ideal Torah study is the transmission of Torah from generation to generation – via the Mesorah. As we daven each day – L'Imod U'Lilamed – it is not 2 separate requests but one huge one – to fulfill an ideal obligation of teaching Torah by example. Thus, only in Torah is a teacher called a Milamed. A Milamed is not a professor or an information booth. A Milamed is one who raises the students to become future Milamdim too – to create new channels of Torah life in the students and children being taught. This is the difference between Rebbe and professor.

Haftarah: Every valley will be raised and every mountain and plateau will be lowered and that which is crooked will become straight (Yeshayahu 40:4) – The simple interpretation of the possuk implies that the return to Eretz Yisrael at the time of the Geulah will be simple and without impediment making it easy to return. **Rav Schwab ztl.** added that there is an additional metaphoric level of interpretation here as the reference to multiple uneven surfaces refers to a change in the world order in the days of Moshiach. Prior to Moshiach's arrival there is a misperceived importance of the multibillionaire who throws his weight around as being important even if he is a scoundrel. However, the view of people and their priorities will change in the time of Moshiach. Things that were considered unimportant will become important and that which was important will be seen as trivial. Thus, crookedness will become straight.