

קהל בני ישראל
זבארוב זאלאזיץ

K'HAL B'NEI YISRAEL

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Ohr Pinchas Parsha Sheet

In loving memory of Reb Pinchas Mandel, Z.L. H.K.M.

Re'eh

Commentaries

Have a great and joyous Shabbos!

PARSHA COMMENTARIES

PARSHAS RE'EH

1. "See, I give..." (11:26) Ohr HaChaim explains this verse to be a preface to Moshe's rebuke to the Children of Israel, Because in order for one to be successful in rebuking, one must meet two conditions: a) one must be personally experienced in the joy of spirituality that they are convincing others to experience, and b) one must also be understanding of the good of this physical world, so that those receiving the rebuke may not claim 'if they would only be familiar with the joys of this world, then they wouldn't be preaching spiritualism.' Therefore, Moshe prefaces his rebuke by saying, "Every one of you personally sees and knows me and is familiar with my biography—my younger years in royalty [Moshe was a king in Midian, see Tr. Shabbos 93], my strength and riches [he became rich from the Tablets], and you are all familiar with my ascending to the Heavens and tasting the highest spiritual joys." After this preface, Moshe's rebuke was readily accepted.
2. "The Blessing..." (11:27) Ohr HaChaim says that one who toils in Torah derives such 'pleasure and life-giving for the Soul' that it would be only right that we should pay the Giver of the Torah a reward rather than the reverse! This realization of the quality of this pleasure is in itself Blessing! Daas Z'keinim quotes the following parable: There was a partition in a road which split into two roads—one was smooth at first but gradually became thorny and hard to travel, and the other road was thorny at first, but eventually became smooth and pleasant to travel. At the partition in the road sat an old, experienced traveler who warned all passersby not to take the smooth road because although at first-glance, it seemed pleasant, eventually it became thorny and hard to travel. "But," he advised, "take the road that seems thorny, because although it is complicated to travel at first, eventually, it becomes smooth and convenient to travel." SO too, Moshe stood at the end of his life and warned the Jewish Children about the two paths and advised them to take the Torah path, which, at first, is thorny but eventually leads to a pleasant world full of bliss.
3. "The blessing...that you will listen. And the curse if you won't listen...and you go astray from the path..." (11:27-28) Kli Yakar notes a number of discrepancies in the language of these verses: a) Why doesn't the verse mention, "If you will listen and do Hashem's commandments [as in many places in the Torah, such as last week's portion, in 11:13]"; b) In verse 12, the Torah mentions, "and you will go astray from the path..." and by the blessing in verse 11, it doesn't mention, "if you will go on the path."; c) Why by the blessing (v.11) does it say "that you will listen," and by the curse (v. 12) it says, "if you will not listen..." Kli Yakar answers that Hashem, in His abundance of faith in His Children, was sure that a) they will eagerly long to listen to His Laws and, will at least, listen to what He expects from them and therefore extends reward for their listening to His Laws as if they actually already performed them; b) Furthermore, He extended His blessing as soon as they listened, so that if there are any obstacles in their actually fulfilling their desire to worship Him, then His blessing will drive these obstacles away and allow them to accomplish their desire and longing. One must only begin and Hashem actually brings the success to fulfillment.

4. "They are across the Jordan," (11:30) Seforno notes that the Torah is warning the Jewish Children at the beginning of their entering the Land that their settlement cannot be one of complacency, but of either success [blessing] or the opposite.
5. "Do away [lit., 'make lost'] with all the places where the Nations, etc. worship their gods..." (12:2) Ohr HaChaim tells us that the Torah is hinting that through the Jewish Children's worshipping Hashem with supernatural strength, this will eventually destroy all their idol worship, both the hidden and the revealed, and will bring the Ultimate Higher Strength to reign -- "and Hashem will be King over all the Earth."
 - a) "And under every Heavily-branched tree," (12:2) Targum Yonatan translates the word raanan to mean 'trees that are beautiful to look at'. The idols were put in places that were beautiful sites.
 - b) "You shall not do the same to Hashem your Hashem...except only to the Place that Hashem your Hashem will choose," (12:4-5) Kli Yakar says that the idol worshippers would choose beautiful places--trees and mountains to attract people to their worship, and therefore, the Torah stresses, "the places where they worship," (v.2). However, the Torah warns, "You shall not do the same to Hashem...only to the Place that Hashem...will choose." Kli Yakar expounds on this verse as follows: You should not treat Hashem in this way: by choosing Him a beautiful place to rest because Hashem Himself will choose His Own resting place! Not you! Because the idols need the place to enhance their honor--not so with Hashem-He enhances the honor of the Place.
6. "And you shall eat there in front of Hashem your Hashem and you shall be happy...in all your endeavors that Hashem your Hashem will bless you." (12:7) Seforno explains the message of this verse as follows: Worship Hashem with joy as it is fit for all that worship Him out of love. This way, you will be successful in all your endeavors.
7. "And you shall eat there in front of Hashem your Hashem and you shall be happy." (v. 12) Kli Yakar explains that if you will even worship Hashem with your eating there, which is a physical act, then definitely joy, which is higher, and in the soul, will be "in front of Hashem your Hashem there".
8. "Only in the Place that Hashem will choose in [the territory of] one of your Tribes." (12:14) Ohr HaChaim points out that the Torah is teaching us that though it is in the territory of you one of your Tribes, still, you may not take it lightly and establish another place; you must adhere to His choice.
9. "You shall pour it on the ground." (12:24) Seforno explains the reason why the blood should be poured onto the ground is because this way, it will not be fit for human consumption anymore.
10. "If you do not eat it, you and your descendants will have a good life since you will be doing what is morally right in Hashem's eyes." (12:25) Kli Yakar explains since if one eats blood, it creates within him a stubborn, non-compassionate nature, which will also in return, effect his descendants, therefore, the Torah promises those that abstain from eating blood will gain for themselves and for their children.

11. "Keep and you should hear..." (12:28) Ohr HaChaim interprets this verse in a number of ways: a) the Talmud {Tr. Avodah Zara 19] says one should first study to accomplish as much in quantity as possible, especially in applicable Torah laws [halacha] and then one should delve in to the depth and quality of the Torah. Therefore, 'keep' refers to compiling Laws and quantity and 'hear' refers to the next step, the depths of studying Torah; b) The Zohar (3:123) says that one who busies himself with sin (Heaven forbid) cannot really comprehend the depth of Torah—so the Torah advises us: 'keep' referring to the withholding of oneself from sin, in order that 'you should hear' meaning to hear and understand the depth of Torah.
12. "Do not listen to the words of this prophet...because Hashem your Hashem is testing you." (13:4) Ohr HaChaim asks, if the prophet is doing Hashem's calling, even if only indirectly, which is 'to test you', then why is he punished with death? He answers: Because really, this miracle was made in order to show the wondrous miracles of nature, not to test the Jewish Children. However, one may ask, why did Hashem allow this false prophet to pervert these wonders, and why didn't Hashem stop it from happening once it is being misused? To answer this question, the Torah says, "to test you." Therefore, Hashem allowed nature to continue its habitual course; however, if not for this reason, Hashem wouldn't allow this evil man to carry out his perverted scheme.
13. "Burn...[almost] like a sacrifice to Hashem your Hashem." (13:17) Daas Z'keinim notes the message is, the city should be completely burned so that all should know that you destroyed it only for the Name of Hashem and not for the sake of deriving pleasure from their money.
14. "And He will give you mercy and you will be mercied," (13:18) Ohr HaChaim explains that Hashem was compelled to bestow this blessing upon them since the commandment to kill a complete city of idol worshipping would normally create an ugly nature of stubbornness and mercilessness. Therefore, the Source of Mercy bestowed upon His Children this blessing so that they should not develop this ugly nature as a result of this commandment. "And you will be mercied," refers to: Now you will mercy others, and not be effected by this commandment of murder, Hashem will mercy you because Hashem has mercy on people who mercy others.
15. "You are Children of Hashem. Do not mutilate yourselves." (14:1) Ramban notes that the Torah did not prohibit crying over the dead because this is the way that Hashem created the world—one naturally cries when someone they love, or are close to, leaves them, even if they are alive.
16. "You should not eat..." (14:3) Ramban explains that eating prohibited foods creates deafening of the spiritual senses of the soul.
17. "Tithe you shall give tithe." (14:22) Kli Yakar says charity must always be given twofold: a) by opening the hand and giving, and b) by opening one's heart and giving with a smile and a complete willingness, and one should especially say words of appeasement to the poor while giving the tithe or charity.
18. Another interpretation he gives is: if you will give once, Hashem will help you to be able to give again. **HAVE A GREAT, JOYOUS SHABBOS!**