



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת כי תבא

וְהָיָה אִם לֹא תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי וְחֻקֹּתַי וְכו', וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל הַקְּלָלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהִשְׁיגוּךָ וְכו'. (דברים כח, טו)

But It will be that if you do not listen to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, to keep, to perform all His commandments and all His decrees ... that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you... (Devorim 28:15)

In this week's *Sidrah*, the Torah describes the dire consequences of sin through the Tochachah. Just before his death, Moshe delivered a chilling prophecy to the people about the horrors that would befall them if they spurned Hashem and the Torah. This marks the second Tochachah in the Torah; the first was presented by Hashem in Parshas Bechukosai, detailing the actions He would take. In contrast, this Tochachah is Moshe communicating what Hashem would do to those who defy Him.

The Meforshim discuss the necessity of both admonitions, highlighting and clarifying the distinctions between them. The Or Hachaim HaKadosh (28:47) poses several questions. First, why does the Torah repeat the curses here instead of relying solely on those mentioned in Bechukosai? Additionally, why are the curses in Bechukosai presented in plural form, while in Ki Savo they are expressed in singular form? Lastly, why are there no consolations provided at the conclusion of the curses in our *Sidrah*, unlike the ending of the curses in Bechukosai?

The Or Hachaim explains that the two sets of curses are fundamentally different, which accounts for the distinctions mentioned earlier. The curses in Bechukosai are addressed to Klal Yisroel as a whole, which is why they are all stated in the plural form. This collective address reflects a situation where the entire nation has sinned and would therefore all be punished. However, one might mistakenly assume that if even only part of the nation acts properly, Hashem would not punish even those who are acting wickedly. To clarify this misconception, the curses in our *Sidrah* are necessary and stated in the singular form to teach that individual sinners or segments of Klal Yisroel that sin will also be punished; Hashem does not tolerate pockets of sin, even if the nation as a whole is behaving correctly.

This explains why no consolation is provided at the conclusion of these curses. In Bechukosai, Hashem promises not to abandon the nation to destruction, stating that He will remember the covenant with their forefathers and the Land, promises that apply to the entire nation. In contrast, individuals among Klal Yisroel (or even a significant portion of the nation) who act wickedly will face eternal punishment. The Or Hachaim cites the concept of *Ir Hanidachas*, where Hashem commands the destruction of an entire city, turning it into an eternal heap of ash, to illustrate that Hashem's assurances only apply to the nation as a whole. Similarly, an individual can be punished eternally, as evidenced by cases where a person is executed by Beis Din.

Rashi, however, differs from the Or Hachaim and provides a different explanation as to why the curses in our *Sidrah* are written in the singular form. He notes (28:23) that Moshe, who proclaimed these curses himself, aimed to temper them by suggesting they do not necessarily apply to the entire nation.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*, offers a contrasting interpretation of the distinction between the two sets of curses based on Rashi's insights. He suggests that the curses in Bechukosai were directed at individuals,

whereas those in Ki Savo were aimed at the nation as a whole. This interpretation aligns with Moshe's statement made preceding the admonition, as the *possuk* (27:9) states: וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה וְהַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּים אֶל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר, הִסָּכֶת וּשְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִהְיִיתָ לְעַם לַה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, *Moshe and the Kohanim, the Leviim, spoke to all Yisroel, saying, "Be attentive and hear, Yisroel: This day you have become a people to Hashem, your G-d."* Klal Yisroel had just been ordained as a nation and were warned not to stray from the Torah. Consequently, since the merit of the public is greater than that of the individual, Moshe softened the severity of the curses by expressing them in singular form, as explained by Rashi.

Furthermore, the Rosh Yeshiva explains that the difficulty raised by the Or Hachaim regarding the absence of consolations can be resolved by another insight of Rashi at the beginning of Nitzavim. Indeed, after the admonition of Ki Savo, there was a consolation. Next week's *Sidrah* opens with the words: וְאַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם כְּלָכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, *You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d* (29:9). Rashi cites the Midrash, explaining that Klal Yisroel were traumatised after hearing the Tochachah, which enumerated many terrible calamities that would befall them if they abandoned Hashem and the Torah. Moshe reassured them by saying, וְאַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם, *You are standing today!* Despite having angered Hashem with their repeated failures in the *midbar*, He had not abandoned them, and they were still in existence. Moshe likened their existence to that of the day, which experiences both darkness and light. Just as Hashem had provided them with light in the past, He would continue to do so in the future.

Moreover, if the curses in Ki Savo are directed at the entire nation of Klal Yisroel, there is no need for consolation, as our nation has been promised that we will exist forever and will never be obliterated. Only in Bechukosai, where the Tochachah addressed individuals lacking this reassurance, was it necessary to provide words of consolation.

The Balei Mussar explain with the above, an apparent paradox in our approach to the Yamim Noraim. The Tur (*Hil. Rosh Hashanah* 581) writes that typically, a person appearing in court for a capital offence wears sombre clothing and, fearing the verdict, does not groom themselves carefully. However, this is not the case for the Jewish people. Confident that Hashem will perform a miracle on their behalf, they prepare for Rosh Hashanah by cutting their hair and donning white festive clothing. Additionally, they partake in the finest delicacies during Rosh Hashanah. This raises the question: how does this confidence align with the deep fear we feel as we approach these Days of Awe?

R' Simcha Zissel addresses this by qualifying this self-confidence. Confidence in Hashem's mercy is the exclusive privilege that belongs to the nation as a whole. However, as individuals, we should all be concerned about the judgment we will face on the Days of Judgement. We ought to dread the potential verdict and not rely solely on miracles. He teaches that the most effective way for an individual to ensure their well-being during these Days of Awe is by connecting themselves to the unit of Klal Yisroel and becoming an integral part of the nation. By working for the benefit of Klal Yisroel, one will be included in Hashem's beneficence and assurance directed towards His people.

As we approach the Yemei HaDin, we should all strive to improve ourselves by fostering *achdus* and harmony among all members of Klal Yisroel. We should endeavour to be part of the nation, thus being included in the miracle of our guaranteed survival. By doing our best to be an integral part of the *kehillah* and Klal Yisroel, we can ensure that we share in the merit of the Klal.

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