

RED ALERT!

Ki Tavo

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DIVREI TORAH

- Our Parsha includes a second covenant between God and the Jewish people. What was to be the difference between the covenant on Gerizim and Eival and the covenant made at Sinai?

Kli Yakar (on verse 9) explains that during the ceremony on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, the nation established a covenant of areivut – mutual obligations – which was different than the covenant at Sinai which represented personal obligations. Kli Yakar further opines that areivut means shared consequences, and explains that in rabbinic literature the word AREIV connotes a co-signer on a loan.

“Any co-signer who sees the borrower wasting his money – he will rebuke him for fear lest he be forced to pay in his place.”

Therefore, this new covenant utilized the idea of shared consequences to reinforce the covenant of Sinai, ensuring that the ancient Israelites understood the shared consequences of ignoring the rules of their society.

[Note: Areivut also applies to modern scenarios. If my Jewish non-observant neighbor drives his car on Shabbat, it will affect God’s judgment of us collectively. Hence I should attempt to influence him positively in his involvement in the Mitzva world. Furthermore, as AIPAC reminds us, allowing Iran to develop nuclear capability will have dire consequences on all the nations, especially those in that region. The inference to be made is not the literal sense of our Parsha, but a valuable message: Global Areivut.]

- (29:14) “And also with them who are not here with us this day.” They refers to future generations. Therefore, you must inform them that the gift of the Land and other (possessions) is given to you on the condition that you keep the covenant, and contingent upon that condition (is the fact that) they will inherit the Land from you. How can those “who are not here this day” be parties to this covenant? The S'forno explains that those who were present were obligated to instruct future generations that the possession of the Land of Israel was contingent upon their continued obedience to the covenant. [Note: When we read in the Sh'ma that we should teach Torah to our children, it is not just the requirement of Torah education that is upon parents. It is a covenantal obligation

to include the next generation in the bonds of Judaism.]

- “The revealed things belong to us and to our children” (29:28). According to the Torah, Moshe stated that there are “revealed things” which are our responsibilities and “hidden things” which remain in the domain of God. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 43b) explains that Moshe used this strange terminology to instill the Israelites with a sense of mutual obligation and responsibility to enforce the strictures of the Torah. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (commentary on 29:28) said that, “this duty of solidarity... is limited to... what is openly or omitted to be done in public, the responsibility for which is shared by everyone whose influence might have presented the sin of commission or omission being done.” Thus, according to the Torah, the entire community had a responsibility not just to follow the directive, but also to ensure that the community did not commit “sins of omission” by ignoring or forgetting the rules dictated in Bible. I view this concept as linked to the Rabbinic requirement to publicize certain miracles. We should also publicly display the performance of Mitzvot in an open society as we have in our community. Many of our non-observant neighbors recognize Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, but are ignorant of Sukkot. Sharing that

Mitzva with neighbors brings them to an awareness of a Mitzva that would otherwise be a “sin of omission.”

- “Life and death I have placed before you, blessing and curse, and you shall choose life so that you and your offspring will live” (30:19). This verse is somewhat puzzling. When Hashem offers you to choose life and you choose it, then isn’t it obvious that you will live?

One straightforward answer that fits in well with the context of the text depends on our noticing that the verses directly before and after this one refer to life specifically in Eretz Yisrael. There were times that a generation sinned so terribly that they brought on exile, but the exile actually took place only a few generations later. The prophet, for example, blames Menashe for the destruction of Yerushalayim (Melachim Bet 23:26), although it took place decades later. Thus, the test of one’s choosing of life in the Land may be only in the lives of the offspring, as the verse infers. (Rav Carmel of Eretz Hemdah)

- The Netziv, understanding the life in question as referring to one’s after-life, points out that there are different relative levels of life and lack thereof. One who sins still has some level of life in the afterlife, which is further reduced the more one sins. To encourage one to see the

value of making proper choices, the Torah points out that the impact will extend to the prospects of future generations as well. We know that people sometimes tire of efforts to save themselves, whether physically or spiritually. Many good people who would find it difficult to succeed are aided by the knowledge that their efforts will help others, certainly when the others are their progeny.

- “And Moshe went.” (31:1) After delivering his speech to the children of Israel, why did Moshe feel the need to go anywhere? If he had more to say he could have easily called the nation back to him. Why did he physically bring his words to the Children of Israel? Chizkuni (on 31:1) explains that Moshe made the extra effort, on the very day of his death, to bring a message of reassurance to the nation and instill in them a sense of confidence in Yehoshua’s leadership. Through his actions, Moshe demonstrated a critical quality in leadership. When the future of a nation is at stake, a leader must be willing to physically take the necessary steps to ensure stability, growth and prosperity.

It is interesting that in modern politics, national leaders are finding value in the “town hall meeting” type of communication with the people. The larger media usage of television and radio is still the preferred method

to mass communication, but the revival of the “town hall meeting” approach is what Moshe understood to develop a closer and more meaningful bond between a leader and his people.

Questions by RED

From the Text

1. Moshe organized a Covenant between Bnei Yisrael and Hashem. It also included those who were not there. Who were not there? (29:14)
2. What would influence a Jewish person to worship idols? (29:16)
3. When the other nations see that Eretz Yisrael will become desolate, and no Jews are there, what will they conclude? (29:24)
4. When Bnei Yisrael will eventually return to obey Hashem, what is the first thing Hashem will do? (30:3)
5. How old was Moshe exactly when he died? (31:1)

From Rashi

6. On what day did Moshe assemble the people for the Covenant? (29:9)
7. Who were the wood choppers and water drawers among Bnei Yisrael? (29:10)
8. When Bnei Yisrael would gather for the Mitzva of Hakhel every seven years, which portion of the Torah will be read? (31:11)

9. Why would Bnei Yisrael bring small children to the Hakhel assembly? (31:12)

10. And teach the song to Bnei Yisrael. What song? (31:19)

From the Rabbis

11. When the Covenant was sealed and the people went home, what did Moshe do? (Ramban)

12. Why was it recommended for non-Jews to attend the Hakhel assembly? (Ibn Ezra)

13. Why is it that writing one letter of a Sefer Torah is sufficient to fulfill the Mitzva of writing a Sefer Torah? (Rambam Hilchot Sefer Torah 7:1)

From the Midrash

14. When a person sins against his friend in public, he should repent and ask forgiveness in public as well. When the sin is against Hashem and is in public, must he repent in public too?

From the Haftara (Yeshayahu)

15. What must happen first in the Final Redemption?

Relationships

- a) Miriam - Korach
- b) Yefuneh - Chur
- c) Aharon - Eliezer
- d) Avraham - Eisav
- e) Chur - Pinchas

ANSWERS

1. Future generations and future converts.

2. Idolatry surrounded Bnei Yisrael on all sides.

3. They will decide that Hashem punished the Jews for deserting Him.

4. He will return the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael.

5. Exactly 120 years old.

6. On the day of Moshe's death.

7. They were Canaanite people who came to convert to Judaism.

8. From the beginning of D'varim, certain portions.

9. The adults will be rewarded for bringing the children.

10. The song of Ha'azinu.

11. He went from his tent and walked throughout the camp to bid everyone a personal goodbye.

12. Maybe they will be inspired and convert.

13. Because the lack of one letter disqualifies the entire Torah.

14. No, he can do it privately.

15. All the Jews must return to Eretz Yisrael.

Relationships

- a) First cousins
- b) Grandfather & grandson
- c) Uncle & nephew
- d) Grandfather & grandson
- e) First cousins once removed