



**RABBI SHALOM**

**ROSNER**

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# The Significance of the Progression of Moshe's Speech

Sefer Devarim is Moshe's final speech to Bnei Yisrael (it begins just 36 days prior to his death). At first glance, the significance of the order of his message may not be apparent. Rav Shlomo Aviner in his Sefer Tal Hermon (on Parshat Ki Tavo) offers an interesting insight into the structure of the message being relayed by Moshe Rabbeinu.

We need to keep in mind that Moshe is addressing a group of people that served as slaves (or descendants of slaves), who have no experience with the basics necessary when considering establishing a society. The first three parshiyot focus on Emunah (faith). Devarim primarily focuses on the faith of the nation in God during the 40 year journey in the desert. Va'etchanan focuses on providing a deeper understanding of faith (10 commandments and shema) and Ekev – the general value of mitzvot and one's actions. This is followed by the next three parshiyot, Re'eh which focuses on national and communal laws, Shoftim, on judicial law, and Ki Tetze – relating primarily to laws of war. After all of these preparatory items, we are now ready to enter the land of Israel.

Parshat Ki Tavo addresses the laws of bikkurim – offering one's first fruits in

Jerusalem, which was to occur after we settled the land of Israel. The parsha begins with the word "והיה" – which connotes happiness. The gra explains that the word היה is in the past and by inserting a letter "ו" at the beginning of the word it transforms the word to a future tense.

When we enter Israel, we and the land experience happiness. When Am Yisrael is not present in the land of Israel, it is not fertile. When the nation is in exile, the land does not bear fruit. Now that we returned, the land is once again blossoming and fertile. There is a special connection between the Jewish nation and the land of Israel.

Yet the happiness we feel is not complete unless we share it with others. That is why following bikkurim we are instructed to share the wealth with *shevet levi*, essentially the educators whose life is dedicated to serving on behalf of the nation and who were not granted a portion of land. The Rambam declares that to experience true simcha in yom tov one needs to share what he has with the less fortunate as he states:

וכשהוא אוכל ושותה חייב להאכיל (דברים ט"ז) לגר ליתום ולאמנה עם שאר העניים האמללים, אבל מי שנועד דלתות חצרו ואוכל ושותה הוא ובניו ואשתו ואינו מאכיל ומשקה לעניים ולמרי נפש אין זו שמחת מצווה

אלא שמחת כריסו (רמב"ם, הלכות שביתת יום טוב, פרק ו:יח)

*When a person eats and drinks [in celebration of a holiday], he is obligated to feed converts, orphans, widows, and others who are destitute and poor. In contrast, a person who locks the gates of his courtyard and eats and drinks with his children and his wife, without feeding the poor and the embittered, is [not indulging in] rejoicing associated with a mitzvah, but rather the rejoicing of his gut.*

Once we have our foothold in Israel and take care of the less fortunate., we ought to internalize our very essence and purpose. Following the commandments connected to ma'asrot, we are told to serve as an *Am Segula* – to set an example of moral and ethical behavior for all of the nations of the world.

Rav Aviner skillfully explains the progression of Moshe's speech from the beginning of Devarim until Ki Tavo, highlighting the foundations upon which each message evolves. As the Yamin Noraim approach, we should take a moment to reflect and internalize these messages as well. We ought to strengthen our emunah and perfect our performance of mitzvot. Appreciate our connection to Eretz Yisrael which was gifted to us once again in our generation and do our part to enhance the lives of those less fortunate. Finally, to do our utmost to set the example of what it means to me a moral and ethical person that is part of the Am Segula! ■

**Mazal Tov to**  
**Rabbi Chanoch & Esti Yeres and family**  
on the birth of their 1st grand/son



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