

## פרשת כי תבוא

In this sixth and penultimate week of *שבוע דנחמתא*, the seven week period following Tish'a B'av leading up to Rosh Hashanah, we continue to fulfill the mandate of the weekly Haftoros of this period to provide comfort and solace.

This week, at first at least, the task appears most daunting. Twice in the Torah do we read the *Tochecha*, the powerful and overpowering rebuke that Hashem gives Israel prior to their sinning. You have been warned, we are told in Parshas Bechukosai, concluding *Mattan Torah* at Sinai and now in the final moments of the final year in the wilderness. It is the seventh of Adar, the day of the death of Moshe Rabbenu Olov Hashalom.

In fact, the concluding verse of the *Tochecha* of this week's Parsha tells us its purpose most clearly. We read (D'vorim Perek 28/Posuk 69):

אלה דברי הברית אשר צוה ה' את משה לקרות את בני ישראל בארץ מואב מלבד  
הברית אשר כרת אתם בחיב:

These are the words of the covenant that Hashem commanded Moshe to make with B'nei Yisroel in the Land of Moav, besides the covenant that He made with them at *Chorev-Sinai*.

Now, there is a covenant that is being entered into soon after these verses as we will read in Parshas Nitzavim. What is the meaning of the covenant established here and what are its implications? What is the relationship with the covenant at Sinai? If it means when the Torah was given, forty years earlier— that doesn't seem to be related to here at when the years in the wilderness are coming to their close!

Rashi writes:

לקרות את בני ישראל - שיקבלו עליהם את התורה באלה ובשבועה:

*To make a covenant with B'nei Yisroel* - That they should accept the Torah with a curse (if they do not fulfill it) and with an oath (not to deviate from it).

מלבד הברית - קללות שבתורת כהנים שנאמרו בסיני:

*Besides the covenant* - the curses in Sefer Vayikro that were said at Sinai.

The covenants under discussion here refer to the severity with which they are to be understood, not in their content alone. Israel pledged itself to take responsibility for the dire threats in the *tochecha* of Vayikro and in that of our Parsha.

באלה ובשבועה

With a curse and with an oath.

Millennia later, when we read these sections in Shul on Shabbos morning we may wonder if our ancestors could have had an alternative to the curse and the oath. We wonder this because in retrospect we know how the curses have been fulfilled.

Even without the erudition of Ramban and his ability to ascribe each section and each phrase to particular historical events, no one is unaware of the terrible destruction and the calamities that have visited Israel over the generations.

When our generation is yet able to hear personal, living testimony from those who survived the *Shoah* we can extrapolate to all of Jewish history. Thus, when we hear the *tochecha* read in Shul it is read in an undertone; the *Baal Kriah* reads it in a quieter voice. It must be heard of course, but it is not read with vigor. Who would want to recite curses with vigor?

The *tochecha* goes to almost the end of our Parsha. Following its reading there are only 8 P'sukim (Perek 29/P'sukim 1-8) remaining and it is a challenge to understand their purpose and their message. Let us examine those verses and see what we can learn from them.

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' לְעֵינֵיכֶם  
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לַפְרָעָה וְלִכְלֵ עֶבְדָּיו וְלִכְלֵ אֶרְצוֹ: הַמַּסּוֹת הַגְּדוֹלֹת אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ  
הָאוֹת וְהַמִּפְתִּיּוֹת הַגְּדוֹלִים הֵהֵם: וְלֹא נָתַן ה' לָכֶם לֵב לִדְעוֹת וְעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת וְאָזְנִים  
לִשְׁמֹעַ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: וְאוֹלַךְ אֶתְכֶם אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה בַּמִּדְבָּר לֹא בָלוּ שְׁלֹמֹתֵיכֶם מֵעַלְיֶיכֶם  
וְנַעֲלָה לֹא בָלְתָה מֵעַל רַגְלֶךָ: לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַלְתֶּם וַיַּיִן וְשִׁכָר לֹא שָׁתִיתֶם לְמַעַן תִּדְעוּ כִּי  
אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וַתִּבְאוּ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיֵּצֵא סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ חֶשְׁבּוֹן וְעוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן  
לִקְרָאתָנוּ לְמִלְחָמָה וַנִּכְּחֵם: וַנִּקַּח אֶת אֶרֶץ וַנִּתְּנָהּ לְנַחֲלָה לְרֵאוּבֵנִי וְלְגָדִי וְלַחֲצֵי שִׁבְט  
הַמְּנַשֵּׁה: וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת דְּבַרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכַּילוּ אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר  
תַּעֲשׂוּ:

Moshe called to all of Israel and he said to them, “You saw all that Hashem did before your eyes in the Land of Egypt to Par’o and to all of his servants and to all of his land. The great events that your eyes saw - those signs and great miracles. But Hashem did not give you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear until this day. I led you in the wilderness for forty years; your clothes did not wear out from upon you and your shoes did not wear out from upon your feet. You did not eat bread and wine and strong drink you did not imbibe in order that you should know that I am Hashem your G-d. You came to this place and Sichon the King of Cheshbon and Og the King of Boshon came out to meet us for war and we smote them. We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to Reuven, Gad and half of the tribe of Menasheh. Guard the words of this covenant and do them in order that you will wisely consider all that you will do.

We are struck by the initial words of this segment. Moshe calls to Israel. We are in Sefer D’vorim. The entire Sefer is Moshe talking to Israel. The *tochecha* which concluded immediately prior to this segment was spoken to all of Israel. Who needed to be called at this point?

Furthermore, there are three parts to this segment: remembering the Exodus, the miraculous daily living in the wilderness and the very recent wars against Sichon and Og. Why are these three aspects mentioned here?

Let us begin by examining the first and the third segments. We begin with Egypt and conclude with Sichon and Og. It is not necessary to justify the mentioning of

the Exodus; throughout the Torah the Exodus is an anchor of all that has transpired. However, the battles with Sichon and Og were not the only confrontations that our ancestors experienced. Why are these battles highlighted?

If the answer was that the Torah wanted to teach us of a most recent battle, together with the earliest battle against Egypt, the war with Midian took place after that with Sichon. What is the rationale for mentioning Sichon and Og here?

The answer might be discovered in the commonality that is found between the Exodus and the battles against Sichon and Og.

Let us examine the record.

In the very beginning of Sefer D'vorim we read of the historical time frame of the extended speech that Moshe Rabbenu gave at the end of his life (Perek 1/Posuk 4):

אַחֲרֵי הַכְּתוּ אֶת סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחֶשְׁבוֹן וְאֵת עֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּעֶשְׂתֵּרֶת בְּאֶדְרָעִי:

[It was] after he smote Sichon the King of the Emorites who dwelled in *Cheshbon* and [after he smote] Og the King of Boshon who dwelled in *Ashteros Edre'i*.

Rashi explains why the Torah found it necessary to give us this information that seems incidental at the very most. He writes:

אחרי הכותו - אמר משה אם אני מוכיחם קודם שיכנסו לקצת הארץ, יאמרו מה לזה עלינו, מה היטיב לנו, אינו בא אלא לקנתר ולמצוא עילה שאין בו כח להכניסנו לארץ, לפיכך המתין עד שהפיל סיחון ועוג לפניהם והורישם את ארצם ואחר כך הוכיחן:

*After he smote* - Moshe said [to himself], 'If I rebuke them before they enter a little bit into Eretz Yisroel, B'nei Yisroel will say, "What does he want from us? What good did he do us? He is just trying to anger us and find a pretext because he does not have the power to bring us into Eretz Yisroel."

Therefore, Moshe waited until he defeated Sichon and Og<sup>1</sup> before Israel and gave Israel possession of their land and then he rebuked Israel.

Rashi continues:

סיחון וגו' אשר יושב וגו' - אילו לא היה סיחון קשה והיה שרוי בחשבון, היה קשה, שהמדינה קשה, ואילו היתה עיר אחרת וסיחון שרוי בתוכה היתה קשה, שהמלך קשה, על אחת כמה וכמה שהמלך קשה והמדינה קשה:

*Sichon...who dwelled...*-If Sichon would not have been powerful and harsh, but he lived in Cheshbon, [the war] would have been harsh because the country was harsh. If the war would have been against another city but Sichon would have dwelled there, the war would have been harsh, because the King, Sichon, was harsh. All the more so [was the war difficult when Israel was battling against] a harsh king in a harsh country.

In Parshas Yisro, we read the response that Yisro expressed after Moshe Rabbenu told him about the Exodus. The Posuk reads (Sh'mos Perek 18/Posuk 10):

וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בְּרוּךְ ה' אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶת הָעָם מִתַּחַת יַד מִצְרַיִם:

Yisro said, 'Blessed is G-d Who saved you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Par'o; He Who saved the nation from being subject to the rule of Egypt.'

Even before we will learn the commentary of Rashi we note the parallel between these two verses. The P'sukim speak about being saved from the country and from its ruler. Seemingly, the ruler and the country are one; why was it necessary to mention both?

Rashi explained the fact that Sichon and Cheshbon were both mentioned in the verse and we are not surprised to see a similar commentary on this verse regarding *Yetzias Mitzrayim*:

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<sup>1</sup> Their lands were on the Golan and were given to Reuven, Gad and half of Shevet Menashe.

אשר הציל אתכם מיד מצרים - אומה קשה:

*Hashem saved you from the hand of Egypt - a harsh nation*

ומיד פרעה - מלך קשה:

*And from the hand of Par'o - a harsh king.*

On the one hand, we certainly cannot compare the Exodus from Egypt with the battles against Sichon and Og. They are incomparable. In each and every aspect the miracles that were done in Egypt and when we left are almost innumerable. They are the focus of the Yom Tov of Pesach.

On the other hand, here in Parshas Ki Sovo the Torah places them together in the same section. Why?

It seems strange, perhaps, to read at the conclusion of the 40 years in the wilderness, when almost all of the adults who left Egypt had perished,:

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' לְעֵינֵיכֶם  
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעוֹה וּלְכָל עַבְדָּיו וּלְכָל אֶרֶצוֹ:

Moshe called to all of Israel and he said to them, "You saw all that Hashem did before your eyes in the Land of Egypt to Par'o and to all of his servants and to all of his land.

How many of them saw what G-d did to Egypt? It is true, someone who was grown-up but not yet 20 at the time we left Egypt, could certainly remember the miracles. The last 1/40<sup>th</sup> of the men didn't die<sup>2</sup> and neither, necessarily did the women nor did Shevet Levi.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of people four decades later did not see or remember the Exodus.

Now the Exodus served as a rationale for the People to know that they were indebted to HaKodosh Boruch Hu.

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<sup>2</sup> Masseches Taanis 30 b.

Thus, the *Aseres HaDibros* begin by mentioning the Exodus as we read in Parshas Yisro (Perek 20/Posuk 1):

אֲנִי ה' אֵל...לְקִיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

I am Hashem your G-d Who took you out from the Land of Egypt from the House of Bondage.

It is likely that we remember the famous dialogue that Ibn Ezra brings on this verse. We will bring significant parts of it here:

שאלני ר' יהודה הלוי מנוחתו כבוד, למה הזכיר אנכי ה' א...ל'קיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים, ולא אמר שעשיתי שמים וארץ ואני עשיתך. וזאת היתה תשובתי אליו. דע, כי אין מעלות בני אדם שוות באמונתם בלבם, שהם מאמינים בשם הנכבד. כי הרבים מאמינים להשמעות אזנים שיאמר להם אדוניהם ככה. ולמעלה מהם, שראו זה כתוב בדברי התורה שנתן השם למשה. ואם יבוא אפיקורס לערער, כי אין א...ל'קים ישימו ידם לפיהם, כי לא ידעו להשיב...

Rabi Yehuda HaLevi of blessed memory asked me, 'Why did the Torah mention that 'I am Hashem your G-d Who took you out of the Land of Egypt' and did not say [I am Hashem your G-d;] I made the heavens and the earth and I made you?'

This was my answer to him:

Know, there are differing levels of *emunah*, faith in G-d, in the hearts of people who believe in G-d. The majority believe what they hear, that which their masters told them [that there is G-d]. There is a higher level which is [those who believe] because they saw that that is what is written in the Torah that Hashem gave to Moshe<sup>3</sup>. If a heretic would come and call into question and say that there is no G-d, they would cover their mouth with their hand because they would not know what to respond.

Thus, writes Ibn Ezra, the Torah had to find a way to address all in the same way despite their differing levels of belief. The Torah had to express the requirement

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<sup>3</sup> But this level is also insufficient.

to believe in G-d in a way that could be understood and appreciated on the more basic levels of belief, not just for those on high levels of sophistication. He continues:

והנה בעבור האות, שעשה השם במצרים, אמר משה אתה הראת לדעת (דברים ד/לה<sup>4</sup>). שהכל ראו זה, חכמים ושאינן חכמים, גדולים וקטנים, גם הוסיף עוד בדבר מעמד הר סיני ששמעו קול השם, על כן אחריו, מן השמים השמיעך את קולו ליסרך (שם שם לו<sup>5</sup>). ואמר באחרונה כי הדעת הגמורה, ששייב האדם אל לבו עד שיתברר לו בראיות, כי השם הוא לבדו, על כן אמר וידעת היום והשיבות אל לבבך (שם שם לו<sup>6</sup>). ואמר דוד ואתה שלמה בני, דע את א...ל'קי אביך ועבדהו (דברי הימים א כח/ט<sup>7</sup>). והדעת הוא בלב לא בהודעת הפה. והנה הזכיר למשכיל אנכי ה', והוסיף אשר הוצאתיך, שיבין המשכיל ושאינו משכיל. ואמר א...ל'קיך כי אתה חייב בעבור שהוצאתיך מבית עבדים להיות לי לעבד שתעבדני, ותהיה לי לעם ואני אהיה לך לא...ל'קים.

Thus, because of the sign[s] that Hashem did in Egypt, Moshe said [to Israel], 'You have been shown in order to know' because all saw the signs in

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<sup>4</sup> The entire verse reads:

אַתָּה הִרְאֵתָ לְדַעַת כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֵל...ל'קים אֵין עוֹד מִלְבָּדוֹ:  
You, Israel, have been shown in order to know that Hashem IS the G-d; there is none besides Him.

<sup>5</sup> The entire verse reads:

מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם הִשְׁמִיעַךְ אֶת קוֹלוֹ לְיִסְרָךְ וְעַל הָאָרֶץ הִרְאָךְ אֶת אֲשׁוֹ הַגְּדוֹלָה וּדְבָרָיו שָׁמַעְתָּ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ:  
From the Heavens He caused you to hear His voice to educate you and on the land He showed you His great fire and you heard His words from the midst of the fire.

<sup>6</sup> The entire verse reads:

וְיָדַעְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְהַשְּׁבִיבֵת אֶל לִבְבְּךָ כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֵל...ל'קים בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת אֵין עוֹד:  
You should know today and return to your heart that Hashem He IS the G-d in the heavens from above and on the land from below; there is none other.

<sup>7</sup> The entire verse reads:

וְאַתָּה שְׁלֹמֹה בְנִי דַע אֶת אֵל...ל'קי אָבִיךָ וְעַבְדֵהוּ בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם וּבְנַפְשׁ חַפְצָה כִּי כָל לְבָבוֹת דּוֹרְשׁ ה' וְכָל יֵצֵר מִחֲשָׁבוֹת מִבֵּין אִם תִּדְרָשׁוּ אִם תִּזְנִיחַ לְךָ וְאִם תַּעֲזָבֵנוּ יִזְנִיחַ לְעַד:  
You, Shlomo my son, know the G-d of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a desirous souls because all hearts seem Hashem and all the tendencies of thoughts understand that if you seek Him, He will be found for you; if you forsake Him, He will abandon you.



Egypt, the wise and those who were not wise, adults and children<sup>8</sup>. Moshe also added regarding *Maamad Har Sinai* that the people heard the voice of Hashem and therefore he said next, “from the heavens Hashem caused you to hear His voice to instruct you.’ Finally, he said that complete knowledge comes about when a person returns to his heart [considering and contemplating emunah] until it is clarified for him with clear proofs that Hashem is the only G-d. That is why he says, ‘You should know today and return to your heart’.

Dovid said, ‘Now, you, Shlomo my son, know the G-d of your father and serve him.’ *Da’as* is in the heart not just by vocally expressing it. Thus the Torah writes for the intelligent person, ‘I am Hashem’ and adds ‘Who took you out’ so that the intelligent person and the one who isn’t intelligent should understand. It says ‘your G-d’ because you are obligated to Him because he took you out from the House of Bondage, ‘For you to be My servant to serve Me. You will be My People and I will be your G-d.’

Ibn Ezra explains that the Torah ‘introduced’ Hashem in the Aseres HaDibros by a mighty act that He performed to which they were all witnesses. They *knew* that they had an obligation to G-d because they personally experienced His salvation. They *knew* that they had that obligation because they saw the signs and miracles that He exhibited so that they would have a firm and incontrovertible basis for their belief.

Based on this explanation of *Ibn Ezra* we can extrapolate to the end of our Parshas Ki Sovo.

The Torah said that ‘you saw’ the greatness of Hashem at the Exodus. But what about those who did not personally see the greatness of Hashem at the Exodus? What about those who were not alive at the time of the Exodus<sup>9</sup>? What about

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<sup>8</sup> This could also mean great people and small people in an intellectual/spiritual sense.

<sup>9</sup> We will not mention infants here, even though our experience tells us that infants do not remember events that occurred while they were alive.

those who were not part of the intellectually sophisticated and needed to perceive an event in 'real time', how would they acquire a deep-seated belief, one that was unassailable, that Hashem is the only G-d?

That is the reason why the battles of Sichon and Og are mentioned here. Since they are somewhat parallel to the Exodus - both were mighty and fearsome rulers and powerful and terrifying lands - Israel of this 40<sup>th</sup> year in the wilderness had a similar experience in their own 'real-time', an experience that was comparable to the Exodus in some aspects.

The rationale for these 8 verses seems to be in the combination of 2 P'sukim: the final Posuk of the Parsha and with it the last verse of the previous section, the *Tochecha*.

The final verse of the *Tochecha* reads:

אֵלֶּה דְבָרֵי הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה לְכַרֵּת אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מִלְבַּד  
הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אִתְּם בְּחָרֵב:

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Chazal interpreted the verse in Tehillim (Perek 68/Posuk 27):

בְּמִקְהֵלוֹת בָּרְכוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִמְּקוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל  
In gatherings, bless G-d, Hashem, [bless him] from the source of Israel.

The Tosefta gives one explanation for the 'source' about which the verse speaks. We read there (Masseches Sotah Perek 6/4):

ר' יוסי הגלילי אומר כיון שעלו ישראל מן הים וראו את אויביהם פגרים מתים ומוטלין על שפת הים אמרו כולם שירה עולל מוטל בין ברכי אמו ותינוק יונק משדי אמו כיון שראו את השכינה הגביה עולל צוארו ותינוק שמט פיו משדי אמו וענו כולם שירה ואמרו זה קלי ואנוהו ר' מאיר אומר אפילו עוברין שבמעי אמותן אמרו שירה שנאמר במקהלות ברכו א...ל'קים ממקור ישראל:

Rabi Yose HaGlili says that when Israel alighted from the Red sea and saw their enemies dead and laid out on the sea shore, they all recited the Song [of *Oz Yoshir*]. The infant on his mother's knees and the suckling baby at his mother's breast, when they saw the Shechinah the infant raised his neck and the suckling baby moved from his mother and they all said the song and said, This is my G-d and I will praise Him.

Rabi Meir says, even the fetuses in their mothers' womb said the song as it says, 'bless G-d from the source of Israel.'

These are the words of the covenant that Hashem commanded Moshe to make with B'nei Yisroel in the Land of Moav, besides the covenant that He made with them at *Chorev-Sinai*.

As we saw, Rashi writes:

לכרת את בני ישראל - שיקבלו עליהם את התורה באלה ובשבועה:

*To make a covenant with B'nei Yisroel*-That they should accept the Torah with a curse (if they do not fulfill it) and with an oath (not to deviate from it).

מלבד הברית - קללות שבתורת כהנים שנאמרו בסיני:

*Besides the covenant*-the curses in Sefer Vayikro that were said at Sinai.

באלה ובשבועה

With a curse and with an oath.

The following verse, the final one in the Parsha, also brought above, reads:

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת דְּבַרֵי הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם לְמַעַן תִּשְׁכַּלּוּ אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן:

Guard the words of this covenant and do them in order that you will wisely consider all that you will do.

Rashi writes (Posuk 6):

עתה אתם רואים עצמכם בגדולה וכבוד אל תבעטו במקום ואל ירום לבבכם, ושמרתם את דברי הברית הזאת.

Now you look upon yourselves as being great and honorable. Don't rebel<sup>10</sup> against G-d and your hearts should not be haughty. Guard this covenant.

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<sup>10</sup> The word that Rashi uses is תבעטו which means to kick. Its use is one that implies harsh rejection and rebellion. It would be similar to a statement of 'lashing out against...'

See later on the verse from Parshas Haazinu from which Rashi chose the use of this word.

Rashi points out that there appears to be dissonance between the Tochecha and the events that Israel has experienced over the last 40 years.

Beginning with the Exodus so many years earlier and with the contemporary defeat of Sichon and Og, Israel has seen success, not curses. And thus, the concern is that Israel will be confident in itself and ignore the dire warnings that were given to them.

Of course, this is reminiscent of the warnings that we read in Parshas Eikev and Parshas Haazinu.

In the former, we read (D'vorim Perek 8/P'sukim 10-17):

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְךָ: הַשְׁמֵר לְךָ פֶּן תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְבַלְתִּי שָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם: פֶּן תֹּאכַל וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵתִים טֹבִים תִּבְנֶה וְיִשְׁבֹּת: וּבָקָרְךָ וּצְאֲנֶךָ יִרְבּוּ וְזָהָב וְיָרֶבֶה לְךָ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְךָ יִרְבֶּה: וְרָם לְבַבְךָ וְשָׁכַחְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמּוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עַבְדִּים: הַמּוֹלִיכְךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא נֹחַשׁ שָׂרָף וְעַקְרָב וְצִמְאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵין מַיִם הַמּוֹצִיא לְךָ מִיַּם מִצּוֹר הַחֲלָמִישׁ: הַמְּאַכְלֶךָ מִן בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן עֲנֹתְךָ וּלְמַעַן נִסּוֹתְךָ לְהִיטִבְךָ בְּאַחֲרֵיתֶךָ: וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ כַּחַי וְעַצָּם יָדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת הַחַיִּל הַזֶּה:

You will eat and you will be satisfied and you will bless Hashem your G-d for the good land that He gave you. Guard yourself lest you forget Hashem your G-d, not observing His commandments and laws and statutes that I command you today. Lest you eat and be satisfied and build good houses and dwell in them. And your cattle and sheep will increase and silver and gold will be increased for you and all that you have will be increased. And your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem your G-d Who took you out of the Land of Egypt from the House of Bondage. Who led you in the great and awesome wilderness where there are snakes and serpents and scorpions and thirst because there is no water; He takes water out of the flint stone for you. He fed you *man* in the wilderness [a food] that your fathers did not know in order to afflict you and to test you in order to do good for you at the end of days. But you will say in your heart, 'It is my

strength and the power of my hand that have made these great achievements.'

And with far greater brevity, we read in Haazinu (Perek 32/Posuk 15):

וַיִּשְׂמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְעַט שְׂמֵנָה עֲבִיֹת כְּשֵׁית וַיִּטֹּשׂ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל... לֵק עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּנְבֵּל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ:

Israel became fat and rebelled; you became fat and thickened and you were covered with fat and you abandoned G-d Who made you and Israel acted disgustingly with the G-d Who saved him.

Do not think, Moshe Rabbenu says to Israel on this last day of his life, that you have a charmed existence. Do not think that the successes that you have had during your years in the wilderness, beginning with the Exodus and continuing with the miraculous way in which you were nourished and clothed and concluding with the routing of the power enemies of Sichon and Og, are guaranteed to continue. Do not mislead yourselves.

If you follow G-d's Word you will be successful; if not, the *Tochecha* which you have just heard will materialize. We have made a covenant, Israel and HaKodosh Boruch Hu. HaKodosh Boruch Hu's Providence will be forever with us; it is up to us to decide how that Providence will express itself.

It is obvious that if we are seeking to find a source of comfort in the Parsha, the way that we have learned its conclusion is not comforting at all, especially with our perspective of history almost two thousand years into the present *Golus*.

If we revisit the question that we raised at the very beginning, however, we may find a solution to our quest and gain new understanding regarding our Parsha's conclusion.

The first verse of our section reads:

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' לְעֵינֵיכֶם  
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעוֹה וּלְכָל עַבְדָּיו וּלְכָל אֶרֶץ:

Moshe called to all of Israel and he said to them, “You saw all that Hashem did before your eyes in the Land of Egypt to Par’o and to all of his servants and to all of his land.

When we encountered this verse earlier, we asked why was there a need for Moshe to call Israel? He has been speaking to Israel throughout the entire Book. The *tochecha* was spoken to them all; who needed to be called?

Let us see the answer that Or HaChaim HaKodosh suggests. He writes:

ויקרא משה אל כל ישראל וגו'. הגם שעד עתה היה מדבר אל כל ישראל, הוסיף לקבץ הנשים והטף והגרים כאמור בסמוך אתם נצבים היום כלכם וגו' טפכם וגו':

*Moshe called to all of Israel* - Even though up until now Moshe was already talking to all of Israel, he gathered the women and children and the converts as it will say soon, ‘You are standing all of you...your children.’

The very first verse in D’vorim writes:

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן במדבר בערבה מול סוף גין פארן ובין תפל ולבן ונצרת ודי זהב:

These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Israel on the eastern side of the Jordan River, in the wilderness, in the *Arava*, across from the Red Sea, between *Poron* and between *Tofel* and *Lovon* and *Chatzeiros* and *Di Zahav*.

Rashi writes there:

אל כל ישראל - אילו הוכיח מקצתן, היו אלו שבשוק אומרים, אתם הייתם שומעים מן עמרם ולא השיבותם דבר מכך וכך, אילו היינו שם היינו משיבים אותו, לכך כנסם כולם ואמר להם הרי כולכם כאן כל מי שיש לו תשובה ישיב:

*To all of Israel* - If Moshe had rebuked only part of them, those who were not there<sup>11</sup> would say, ‘You heard *Ben Amram* [rebuking] and you didn’t answer him back, saying this and that? If we would have been there we would have answered him back.’ Therefore, Moshe gathered all of them and said to them, ‘You are all here; whoever wants to reply should reply.’

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<sup>11</sup> Literally – ‘in the marketplace’.

Or HaChaim points out there that Moshe's speech to 'all of Israel' had two parts, *Mussar*-the rebuke that he gave and the teaching of the many Mitzvos that are contained in Sefer D'vorim.

It is thus possible, explains Or HaChaim, that in any case not everyone was there and specific groups of people did not have to be there all of the time.

Our verse that writes that Moshe called them teaches us that now Moshe wanted to guarantee that everyone would be present.<sup>12</sup> What was the vital need to demand total participation and the presence of all?

Or HaChaim teaches that these verses are preparation for the covenant that all of Israel will enter as we read in the beginning of Parshas Nitzavim (Perek 29/P'sukim 9-12):

אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם כְּלֶכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֵ...לְקִיכֶם רְאִשֵׁיכֶם שְׁבֻטֵיכֶם זְקֵנֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל  
אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: טַפְכֶם נְשִׁיכֶם וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶרֶב מַחְנֶיךָ מִחֹטֵב עֵצֶיךָ עַד שְׂאֵב מִימֶיךָ:  
לְעִבְרֶךָ בְּבְרִית ה' אֵ...לְקִיךָ וּבְאֵלֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר ה' אֵ...לְקִיךָ כִּרְתַּת עִמָּךְ הַיּוֹם: לְמַעַן הִקִּים  
אֶתְךָ הַיּוֹם לוֹ לְעַם וְהוּא יְהִי לְךָ לֹא...לְקִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לְךָ וְכַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם  
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב:

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<sup>12</sup> We read in Parshas Vaeschanan (D'vorim Perek 5/Posuk 1):

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת הַחֻקִּים וְאֵת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי דֹבֵר  
בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם וּלְמַדְתֶּם אֹתָם וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם:

Moshe called to all of Israel and he said to them, 'Listen, Israel, to the statutes and the laws that I speak in your ears today; learn them and guard them to do them.'

Certainly this verse presents the same problem as the Posuk in our Parsha. Moshe was already speaking to all of Israel. Why was it necessary to call them?

Or HaChaim HaKodosh answers in the context of upcoming *Aseres HaDibros* there:

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה...אֲפֹשֶׁר שַׁעַד עֵתָה הִיא מְדַבֵּר עִם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְכִשְׂרָצָה לֹא עֲשֵׂת הַדְּבָרוֹת קָרָא גַם  
לְנָשִׁים וְהִטָּף כְּמַעֲמַד הַר סִינַי כְּאֹמְרוֹ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

*Moshe called*-Perhaps until now he was speaking with the men and since Moshe wanted to tell them the Ten Commandments he also called the women and children to be like it was at *Maamad Har Sinai* when the Ten Commandments were said to all of Israel.

You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem your G-d, your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel. Your children, your wives and your convert who is in the midst of your camp, from the woodchopper to the water drawer. For you to pass through the covenant of Hashem your G-d and the oath that Hashem your G-d makes with you today. In order to establish you today as His People and He will be your G-d like He spoke to you and like He vowed to your fathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

The Torah spells out that *all* were at the covenant. That is why Moshe called them together.

Thus, Or HaChaim teaches us, that the eight verses that conclude our Parsha are not a conclusion for the *tochecha*. Rather, they are an introduction to the covenant that G-d makes with Israel to be our G-d.

The miracles discussed in our Parsha, from the Exodus to the miraculous lifestyle in the wilderness to the miraculous victories in that 40<sup>th</sup> year in the wilderness are all in preparation for the covenant.

Israel has just completed hearing the terrible rebuke of the *Tochecha*. Could anyone have heard the ominous predictions and remained composed and relaxed?

Everyone must have been agitated. They knew their own failures and faults. When would the calamitous prophecies take place?

Our Parsha concludes with its comforting message. Hashem's Providence is with you. It is not an exemption from punishment; it is not a reason to ignore the warnings. It is a reason to understand that He remains our Father.

And with that sense of reassurance, hope and optimism, HaKodosh Boruch Hu invited Israel to renew their covenant with Him for all generations<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> We read in the immediately succeeding verses (13-14):

וְלֹא אֶתְכֶם לְבַדְכֶם אֲנֹכִי כִּרְתֶּנּוּ אֶת הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת: כִּי אֶת אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנוּ פֹה עִמָּנוּ עִמָּד הַיּוֹם לְפָנַי ה' אֲלֵינוּ וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ פֹה עִמָּנוּ הַיּוֹם:



Shabbat Shalom

Ksiva Vachasima Tova

Rabbi Pollock

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Not with you alone I am making this covenant and this vow. But with he who is here standing with us today before Hashem your G-d and with he who is not with us here today.

Rashi writes:

ואת אשר איננו פה - ואף עם דורות העתידים להיות:  
*And with he who is not here* - [The covenant is made] also with succeeding generations.