Miller’s Musings  פרשת בחוקותי

The rebuke inflicted upon the Jewish people this week is one that is comprehensive in both the recriminations of past indiscretions and it’s foreshadowing of what is to come should we not heed the warnings.  Seemingly out of place in this context is the verse that proclaims that Hashem will “remember My covenant with Yaakov....Yitzchok and....Avrohom....and the land I will remember“, surely totally not in keeping with the theme of admonitions being meted out?  In what way is this a form of castigation?

According to Jewish thought no two people are ever held to account in exactly the same way.  Each person’s judgment by G-d is configured precisely according to that person’s unique set of circumstances, with every facet of their personality, life situation and experiences taken into consideration.  If this is true on an individual level, it must also apply to us on a national level.  When we are judged as a people it is not only based on the wrongs we have done but also on the advantages  that have been granted us that we have squandered in our pursuit of exclusively worldly pleasures.  Being born into a family that included such luminaries as the forefathers and being allowed to inhabit a land with such inherent potential for holiness as Eretz Yisroel, brings with it the responsibility to utilise those gifts and greater negative repercussions as a consequence of not doing so. This, says the Shlo Hakodosh, is why the verse about remembering Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, as well as Eretz Yisroel,  is included as a part of our admonitions.

The quality of having ‘yichus’, having individuals of greatness  within one’s ancestry, is something that has always been valued and sought after by the Jewish people.  In truth however the worth of yichus is not in being able to namecheck some illustrious Rov of yesteryear, but in the atmosphere of devotion to Hashem created by being in such a family and the almost natural inclination nurtured within a home of this kind to a vs certain mode of living.  As we have seen, however, being a descendant of nobility comes with its own pitfalls and if we do not follow their ways we are responsible for the opportunity we have wasted to emulate those who came before us.  Indeed yichus is a tremendous gift to be endowed with, as long as we do not spurn it, yet even greater is working on ourselves to be the yichus for future generations and giving them that start in life that we may not have had.
May this week's Shabbos lay the foundation for a week full of growth.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם