



דרכים בפרשה

בחקתי



אם-בחקתי תלכו ואת-מצותי תשמרו ועשיתם אתם

If you follow My laws and faithfully observe My mitzvos

Rashi notes that this cannot be referring to the fulfillment of the mitzvos because the very next words are **ואת מצותי תשמרו** which directly refers to the mitzvos. Accordingly Rashi offers another idea, **שתהיו עמלים בתורה** - the Torah is referring one that toils in Torah. The Nesivas Shalom wonders why in fact did the Torah express it in this manner; why not simply state, **אם תהיו עמלים בתורה**? He explains that the manner in which one achieves properly following the Torah and mitzvos is through the *ameilus*

אם- בחקתי תלכו - *teileichu*- walking along a path. We are accustomed to think that walking on the path of HaShem means doing mitzvos when the opportunity arises and avoiding aveiros when necessary. The Nesivas Shalom writes that the Torah is teaching us about a much higher level. **אם- בחקתי תלכו** means living one's life in a manner which is entirely consistent with the flow, rhythm and heartbeat of the Torah. This is much more than checking off the "to do list". The person's entire **מהלך החיים** becomes one that is rooted in the Torah as a guide in this world.

תנא דבי אליהו כל השונה הלכות בכל יום מבטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא שנאמר הליכות עולם לו אל תקרי הליכות אלא הלכות - *Whoever studies halachos every day, he is assured of life in the World-to-Come, as it is said, The ways (halichos) of the world are His.* Do not read halichos, but halachos. The root of the word *halacha* is *halicha*, a way, a path that is guided by principle. While each halacha may deal with a

different law and perhaps a narrow set of circumstances, the sum total of all the halachos equates to a *mehalech hachaim*. Furthermore, the word *olam* teaches us that its observance is not limited to the shul but rather, to our conduct in anything in this world. Included in this of course is the world of living according to the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law. This means that when our Rabbanim make suggestions, we won't counter with, "where does it say this?"

I heard from Rav Refoel Shmulevitz in the name of Rav Ruderman a novel explanation of the gemara in Pesachim (68b): **רב יוסף ביומא דעצרתא אמר: עבדי לי עגלא תלתא. אמר, אי לא האי יומא דקא גרים — כמה יוסף איכא בשוקא** - The Gemara relates that Rav Yosef, on the day of Shavuot, would say: Prepare me a choice third-born calf. He said: If not for this day on which the Torah was given that caused the Jewish people to have the Torah, how many Yosefs would there be in the market (i.e. I would just be another Joe on the street)? It is only due to the importance of Torah study that I have become a leader, and I therefore have a special obligation to rejoice on this day.

how many Yosefs would there be in the market? Rav Ruderman explained this as follows: If not for the Torah which teaches us how to live our lives in every circumstance, I would have been a very fragmented person. In shul you would have found R'Yossel, a different version and in business a guy named Joe. On vacation? *frag*

nisht! But the Torah gave us a *mehalech Hachaim* how to constantly live in every scenario.

But there is another major benefit of **אם בהקתי תלכו** - living a life with the *mehalech hachaim* of the Torah. The seforim bring a story of a tzaadik and a rasha that passed on from this world. The rasha observed the great court case of the tzaadik. They pulled out his daily schedule and hour log. They read aloud every entry. “Woke up with neigel vasser; dressed according to Shulchan Aruch; birchas hashachar; mikvah; davening; some learning; breakfast; work; coffee break; work; lunch; more work; a quick nap before chavrusah; learning; some more work; supper with the family; mincha maariv and night seder (etc.). The verdict was in: the tzaadik received reward for each and every entry. The rasha watched this and began to smile. He was excited now. Here in the world of truth they pay for coffee and nap time and meals. Sure he had done many notable aveiros but he also drank enough coffee and was a big enough foodie to help balance the scales. As they reached his turn and read aloud each and every entry, his head grew bigger and bigger, But wait! What was that they said? There was absolutely no reward coming his way for any of it. He goes to the “complaint desk”, asking why they are treating the tzaadik with favoritism.

They offered him the following *mashul*: The king had given out the grain contract for the palace. One of the onlookers noticed that each bag of grain also contained some pebbles. Although pebbles cost practically nothing, the price was not adjusted to accommodate the pebbles. The entire bag was all the same rate. So this person went and made an offer. He

would undercut the current supplier. By giving a bag mostly filled with pebbles and only a little grain, he could make a handsome profit and charge considerably less. Of course, on his first delivery they opened the bags and saw what was going on, throwing him into jail. The order was for grain, not dirt! They explained that it is impossible for a bag not to have some waste so a little bit is acceptable, but your entire bag is waste and not only is there no payment for that, it is a highly offensive and punishable action.

Similarly, in our daily lives, we must remember what the purpose of everything is. How one gets there is through the *mehalech hachaim* of the Torah. Along the way, of course there is coffee and great food, but what is the *tachlis*; where are we heading and how will we get there? If it becomes all about the vacations and everything else, than there will be no payment for that. But if the vacation is for the purpose of recharging our batteries to serve HaShem with more strength, than even those times will earn a reward.

אם בהקתי תלכו - *teileichu*- walking along a path- earning reward along the path for everything we do, even the mundane, because after all, it is all for the *tachlis* of serving HaShem.

מרדכי אפפול, Good Shabbos,



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