



# דרכים בפרשה

כי תצא



אשר קרך בדרך ויזנב בך כל הנחשלים אחריך ואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלקים

*How he happened upon you on the way and cut off all the stragglers at your rear, when you were famished and weary; and did not fear HaShem.*

One of the mitzvos that must constantly be on our mind is the commandment of remembering what Amalek sought to do to Klal Yisroel upon exiting Mitzrayim. It wasn't so much that they attacked, but rather, the manner in which they did so. They specifically looked for the weakest links in the chain by fighting against the stragglers that could not keep up with everyone else.

The possuk relates that **ואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלקים** *you were famished and weary; and did not fear HaShem*. The literal reading of the possuk actually infers that we are discussing the same group of people. "You were famished and weary", **ולא ירא אלקים** - *and you did not fear HaShem*". Rashi however explains this as referring to two different groups. Those that "were famished" refers to those of Klal Yisroel that were straggling behind, and those that "did not fear HaShem" refers to the people of Amalek.

In a brilliant chasidishe explanation, the Rebbe Reb Zisha offers another pshat based on the literal reading. These same people that were tired and hungry were also non G-d fearing people. The Torah is sharing a phenomenon where you can have a person that is trying so hard to serve HaShem, to the point of exhaustion, and yet, this person may indeed fall short when it comes to actually fearing HaShem.

On a simple level, we can see people that are talmidei chachamim of the highest caliber, but when it comes to their *yiras shomayim*, a lot is left to be desired. For some reason they don't quite make it there. At the same time, there are

those that may not have the greatest knowledge of Torah, but when it comes to serving HaShem, they have no parallel.

How could it be that one does everything that he is supposed to and learns all the Torah in the world, and yet, about him it can be said, **ולא ירא אלקים** "You didn't fear HaShem"?

A constant theme that we have been discussing is the idea that when doing mitzvos and even whilst learning the Torah, one needs to connect to HaShem in that which he is doing. It is not enough to just do mitzvos and make brachos, because "it's what we do", but one must actually think of HaShem during the performance as well. By omitting this main ingredient, one can keep it all but still completely lack any connection to HaShem.

There is a beautiful explanation of a Gemara in Masechta Chagiga (9b) that was offered by the Baal Shem Tov which underscores this idea. אמר ליה בר הי הי להלל מאי דכתיב ושבתם וראיתם בין צדיק לרשע בין עובד אלקים לאשר לא עבדו היינו צדיק היינו עובד אלקים היינו רשע היינו אשר לא עבדו אמר ליה עבדו ולא עבדו תרוייהו צדיקי גמורי ניהו ואינו דומה שונה פרקו מאה פעמים לשונה פרקו מאה ואחד - *Bar Hei Hei said to Hillel: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Then you shall again discern between the tzaddik and the rasha, between he who serves Hashem and he who does not serve Him" (Malachi 3:18). There are two redundancies here: "The tzaddik" is the same as the עובד אלקים - "he who serves God," and "the rasha" is the same as "he who does not serve Him." Hillel said to him: The עובד אלקים - one "who serves Him" and the one "who does not*

serve Him” are both referring to completely righteous people. But the possuk is hinting at a distinction between them, as one who reviews his studies **מאה פעמים** /one hundred times is not comparable to one who reviews his studies one hundred and one times- **מאה ואחד**.

From just one extra review of the Gemara one receives the title **עובד אלקים**, but anything less, even if I have already learned the gemara one hundred times, I am not called an **עובד אלקים**? (The Gemara asks and answers this as well-**ע"ש**)

The Besht homiletically explained that you can have two people learning the gemara again and again, probing, exploring and plumbing its greatest depths, even one hundred times, and yet, one may still fall short. The difference is that one of them learned his one hundred times plus **אחד**. The **אחד** here refers to HaShem, i.e. he included HaShem in his Torah learning. The other person learned one hundred times which of course is an incredible feat, but he didn't think of HaShem while doing so. He was **מאה** but he lacked including the **אחד**.

The Maharal in *Sefer Shiva D'nichemta* writes that when the Gemara teaches that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed **על שלא ברכה בתורה** -*because they did not say a bracha before learning Torah*, it can be referring to this idea. Of course they “made birchas hatorah” before learning. But perhaps they didn't think of Hashem while doing so.

The Torah is teaching us that learning Torah all day long, and keeping all of the mitzvos with all of the latest *chumras* is not enough. What makes a difference is: are we infusing HaShem into all that we do or not?

But now let us add another layer. Recently, I attended a wedding that featured a *mitzvah tantz* which ended a few hours past mid-night. I noticed that there were some people that had no interest at all in being there, looking at their watches with feelings of exhaustion counting

the minutes until it would finally end. At the exact same time in the same exact hall, there were those that were smiling away, enjoying each and every moment as if they could not get enough. The difference between them was that some felt that they *had* to be there while others genuinely *wanted* to be there. One that performs the mitzvos as if they are being forced, will come away feeling exhausted and can never reach a level of *yiras shomayim* in that manner.

The navi writes (Yeshaya 43:21-22) **עם זו יצרתי לי תהלתי יספרו ולא אתי קראת יעקב כי יגעת בי ישראל** - *The people which I formed for myself, that they might tell of my praise. And yet, you have not called to Me, Yaakov, for you have wearied yourself about Me, Yisroel.* The Dubno Maggid explains that a mitzvah which is performed amidst exhaustion and kvetching causes HaShem to respond, **ולא אתי קראת יעקב כי יגעת בי ישראל** -*you have not called to Me, Yaakov, for you have wearied yourself about Me, Yisroel*, meaning that you were calling someone else (someone else's mitzvos), but not HaShem. What is the proof? The tiredness tells the tale. So what is the purpose of the mitzvos? *That they might tell of my praise.* When one is happy with what he is doing, then and only then will the praise happen. Coming back to our possuk, **וואתה עיף ויגע ולא ירא אלקים** -*you were weary and did not fear HaShem*-the tiredness showed that the connection to HaShem was lacking, therefore the possuk was able to conclude that they were non G-d fearing.

Now in the *yemei haratzon*, we should merit to view the mitzvos with *ratzon*, i.e., in a favorable manner, thereby leading us to serve HaShem through joy and happiness causing us to give praise. By connecting to HaShem in this manner, we will in turn find favor in His eyes as well.

**מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,**



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