



דרכים בפרשה

דברים

רב לכם שבת בהר הזה. פנו וסעו לכם

Enough of your dwelling by this mountain. Turn yourself around and journey 1:6-7



Quoting a Midrash, Rashi interprets our possuk in a very intriguing homiletical manner. The Midrash explains that Moshe told Klal Yisroel that even though they have accomplished so much at Har Sinai, the time had come to journey to the Amorite mountain “and all of its neighbors”.

The Meforshim wonder about this. They had just received the Torah, built the Mishkan and appointed the Sanhedrin, and now they were being told to leave this holy site and travel to the neighbors? Wouldn't it have made more sense to stay put and actually protect the Torah that they were now holding onto so dearly rather than integrating with the *umos ha'olam*? They explain that the “*Leibidike Torah*” imparts on every *Yid* the ability to live within the world. The challenge is to live like a *Yid* even amidst others. This of course is how we accomplish becoming an *Ohr l'amim*, “a light unto the nations”.

We can now read the possuk as follows, רב לכם שבת - *you have spent enough time* here in the *midbar* on your own. פנו וסעו לכם - *turn yourself around and go for yourselves*. By going out into the world, you are learning how to put the Torah into practice.

The concept of going out into the world will not be the same for every person. Not every person is comfortable being “in the light”. For those that tend to be more introverted, it is worthwhile to keep in mind Rav Meir Shapira zt”l’s *vort* (mentioned previously Parshas Chukas). When we ask HaShem: ” ותן בלבנו בינה - *May You place it in our hearts an understanding, so that we*

may comprehend and perceive, listen, learn and teach”, this does not necessarily mean that we are aspiring to be teachers. There are many ways to teach without ever stepping foot into a classroom or standing at a pulpit. Every step that we take and every word that we utter is seen by others and when utilized properly is a teaching moment, thus fulfilling וללמד. Similarly, when the quietest of all *yidden* behaves in a manner that causes others to proclaim their awe and admiration for HaShem and His *kinderlach*, he has fulfilled the mitzvah of 'ה אהבת ה' as the gemara in Mesechta Yoma 86a brings- ואהבת את ה' אלהיך שיהא שם שמים -מתאהב על ידך “*And you shall love the Hashem*” which means that you shall make the name of Heaven beloved. How should one do so? שיהא -קורא ושונה ומשמש ת”ח - *One should do so in that he should read Torah, and learn Mishna, and serve Talmidei Chachamim, בנחת, ויהא משאו ומתנו בנחת, and he should be pleasant with people in his business transactions, מה הבריות אומרות עליו אשרי אביו שלמדו תורה אשרי רבו שלמדו תורה- What do people say about such a person? Fortunate is his father who taught him Torah, fortunate is his rebbe who taught him Torah.* Furthermore, in his own quiet way, he has managed to shine brilliant lights upon the world.

Conversely, for others, being too much of an *Ohr l'amim* is also no good as it comes with its own price tag, and indeed, at times, many seem to get so caught up with this ideology that they tend to forget about being “a light unto themselves”.

This challenge is not only unique to Yidden living out there in the world, but it really pertains to any time one attempts to incorporate a good *middah* into their life. Is this being done at the expense of something else? Let's take *chessed* for example: am I going out on a limb for everyone but neglecting my own family and yes, even myself? As cliché as it sounds, it really is true that charity begins at home.

So how do we manage to spread the brilliant light of the Torah and at the same time maintain our own morals and standards without ever compromising on what the Torah teaches us?

Perhaps the answer to this can be found at the beginning of the next *perek*. HaShem tells Moshe, רב לכם סב את ההר הזה פנו לכם צפנה - *enough of your circling of the mountain; turn yourselves north (tzafon)*. Based on the Midrash, the seforim explain that Tzafona can refer to that which is hidden. (Similarly, we find the same usage of this word in reference to hiding the *afikoman*- at the *leil ha'seder* - "צפון".)

There are many ideas that we can extrapolate from this usage in our possuk that can shed light on our issue. The first idea is that of the Kli Yakar. He famously read this possuk as follows: רב לכם - *you have enough* material things, פנו לכם צפנה, - *go now and hide them*. Being blessed with something does not give one a licence to poke out people's eyes with it (*tzu shtechen der oygen*). In fact, the Kli Yakar notes that when we do so, anti-Semitism rears its ugly head because Eisav looks at us and feels that we have taken what belongs to him as per the *brachos* that Yaakov "stole".

So step one in our challenge is to remember that what we have was not given to us to show off, but rather to use as necessary. While it may or may not be okay for others to flaunt what they have, a Jew certainly is never allowed. In

this manner we will still remain unique.

But now let's move to a much deeper level. *Tzafona* can also refer to that which is hidden within a person. Every person is made up of an external part to them which is always on display and a much deeper internal part to them. We may see a nice smile on someone's face but deep down they are very sad.

We may at times perform certain *mitzvos* that are just external and lifeless, devoid of depth and true feelings. Outwardly, there may be a magnificent façade telling one story but on the inside, it is all empty. At other times, our actions may truly be in complete harmony with our hearts.

How do we manage to synchronize the two, bringing our insides and our outside onto the same page? The Chovos Halevavos (Shaar Habitachon ch.4) discusses the benefits of time spent alone. He advises that during those times, one can reconnect the inner soul with HaShem. It is a time that can be used to stop and think about how we are doing with the most important relationship in the world.

Perhaps the Torah is telling us that as important as it is to be "out there", one must constantly remember to perform a diagnostic reality check. In this manner, we can recalibrate as necessary, never losing sight of Har Sinai. How do we accomplish this? פנו לכם צפנה - by looking into ourselves, constantly spending the time searching the hidden depths of our souls.

May we be *zoche* to always be a true *Ohr l'amim*, spreading the light of *kedusha* everywhere, but at the same time, never diminishing our own light!

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפעל



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