



דרכים בפרשה

כי תבוא



שמעתי בקול ה' אלקי עשיתי ככל אשר צויתני

I have obeyed Hashem my God; I have done just as You commanded me.

In this week's parsha, the Torah discusses the mitzvah of מעשר ווידי. When one thinks of the word ווידי (confession), thoughts of beating the chest whilst reciting the words of אשמנו automatically come to mind. Many of the commentators wonder how the concept of viduy comes into the parsha of thanking HaShem for the produce. The basic idea that is offered is based on the similar words מודים or תודה which both have the same שורש as ווידי. When one says the words "thank you", in essence they are acknowledging that they needed to come on to that person to get the job done. A thank you is like saying, "I must confess that I could not do it without you!" על חיינו המסורים - בידך thank You for giving me my life in essence means that I acknowledge and even confess that my life comes from You HaShem. After a wonderful harvest or a successful business deal, it takes a big man to stand up and say, "It wasn't me; not my wisdom or my business savvy or even my connections, but rather, it was all You HaShem." That is so much more than giving a kiddush in shul to give a "shkoyach" for getting the deal.

Continuing further on this theme of ווידי, the person then proclaims, שמעתי בקול ה' -אלקי עשיתי ככל אשר צויתני *I have obeyed Hashem my God; I have done just as You commanded me.* The question that begs to

be asked once again is, "wherein lies a confession in this statement?" If I would have cut corners, performing a בדיעבד job, in that moment of truth, I would have to admit that although in the end of the day, I did get the job done; I still could have done a better job doing it in a לחתחילה manner. Yes, that is indeed a confession, but here the possuk is referring to someone that even did his job in the best possible way.

In the past, we discussed a gemara in Masechta Chagiga (9b). אמר ליה בר הי להלל מאי דכתיב ושבתם וראיתם בין צדיק לרשע בין עובד אלקים לאשר לא עבדו אמר ליה עובד אלקים היינו רשע היינו אשר לא עבדו אמר ליה עובד ולא עבדו תרוייהו צדיקי גמורי נינהו ואינו דומה שונה פרקו מאה פעמים *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 responded: *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.

אמר ליה ומשום חד זימנא קרי ליה לא עבדו אמר ליה אין צא ולמד משוק של חמרין עשרה Bar Hei פרסי בזוזא חד עשר פרסי בתרי זוזי Hei said to him: And due to one extra time that he did not review, the verse calls him a person "who does not serve Him"? He said to him: Yes. Go and learn from the market of donkey drivers. One can hire a driver to travel up to ten parsas for one dinar. However, the eleventh parsa will already cost you two dinars.

Previously (Derachim Beparsha - Ki Seitzai), we offered a pshat from the Baal Shem Tov that אחד refers to HaShem and that Hillel is teaching us to remember to "add the One" to all that we do. Upon reading this vort, a dear friend of mine, R'Yehuda Melech G. approached me and offered another peshat. The amount of מאה/100 can perhaps refer to a symbolic amount which may be different for every person. I.e., each person has their own set amount of effort that they must exert in order to master a gemara or accomplish the task/mitzvah properly. מאה ואחד refers to the person that after doing everything necessary, still does a drop more going above and beyond. Accordingly, Hillel is teaching us that you cannot begin to compare the person that does it all to the person that still adds a bit more. The true עובד אלקים will always find a way to do more.

In this exact fashion, the Kotzker Rebbe zt"l looked at our possuk and explained a

great viduy. שמעתי בקול ה אלקי עשיתי ככל אשר צויתני - I have obeyed Hashem my God; I have done just as You commanded me. Yes, it is true that I did "just" what was asked of me, however, I did just that and no more (at times I may have even been thinking שפטרני).

As we look back at our year and take notes of all the bracha in our lives, we cannot fail to notice how HaShem takes care of us. HaShem doesn't do things for us in a "no frills" manner, but rather בחן עובד אלקים. The עובד אלקים will emulate HaShem. He will look back and say, yes I davened, learned, performed tzeddaka and chessed, dealt faithfully in business etc., but still, perhaps I could have done it all a little better; there is room for improvement.

A well-known motivational speaker began his lecture with the following request: "Everyone, please raise your arms as high as you can." After all arms were raised, he then asked, "Now please raise it even higher." And everyone did so despite the fact that they already went as high as they could go. The עובד אלקים keeps on pushing and continues to rise up adding that אחד over and over again.

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos



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