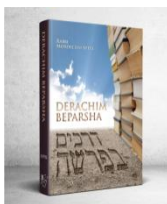


דרכים בפרשה וילך

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וילך משה וידבר את הדברים האלה אל כל ישראל

"Moshe went and addressed these statements to all of Yisroel."

Parshas Vayeilech is usually joined with Parshas Nitzavim and read right before Rosh Hashanah. However, when Rosh Hashanah occurs on Monday and Tuesday or Tuesday and Wednesday, the parshah of Vayeilech is separated from the previous parshah and is read on Shabbos Shuvah. In any event, it comes during a time of intense teshuvah.

Shabbos and teshuvah is a combination of two extremes: Shabbos is a day of pleasure and joy, while teshuvah is reflection and repentance on our past misdeeds, which often brings along pangs of guilt and remorse. How do these opposites co-exist in a single day?

The answer is that there is really no contradiction at all between the two. As with all other mitzvos of the Torah, we are obligated to "serve Hashem with joy" while we fulfill the mitzvah of teshuvah. In fact, teshuvah, which rectifies all the mitzvos we have previously neglected or fumbled, is in and of itself a cause for great joy. Breaking free from the control of our yetzer hara in order to return to Hashem is a cause for intense celebration. Furthermore, the last Mishna of Maseches Taanis teaches us that Yom Kippur was a Yom Tov like no other – as the Gemara explains, because of the forgiveness of the aveiros committed that year.

This idea is reflected in Parshas Vayeilech: *Vayeilech* means "And he went." "Going" means leaving one place and heading towards the next. Likewise, when one does teshuvah, he leaves the past behind and starts on a new path in life.

This parshah also focuses on joy, as the Torah relates that Moshe completed writing the Torah which he handed over to the Kohanim and the Levi'im. This was certainly a cause for great celebration, just like the joy of Simchas Torah, when we complete reading the Torah! This emphasizes the lesson which we have learned above that the mitzvah of teshuvah can and must be fulfilled with joy.

Regarding this awesome season of teshuvah, the seforim tell us that this period is called *שער ירושלים* – "Your gates, Yerushalayim." This means that as we enter the days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, followed by Sukkos, Hoshana Rabba and Simchas Torah, we are supposed to realize that we are on a pathway towards true happiness together with Hashem and His Torah. So now, as we stand

at the gates, we are faced with a big question. Allow me to explain based on a shmuess from Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt"l:

One of the kapitlach of Tehillim which is recited on Rosh Hashanah and again on the night of Yom Kippur is chapter 24, *לדוד מזמור*. There are two similar pesukim with a slight variation that we shall focus on. *שאו שערים ראשיכם והנשאו* and *שאו שערים ראשיכם ושאו פתחי עולם*. Both pesukim mean "Raise up your heads, O gates, to allow the King to enter." But what is the difference between *הנשאו* and *ושאו*? As similar as these two words are, the difference is huge. Rav Wolbe explained that "ve'hinasu" means "and it will be lifted," whereas "use'u" means "you shall lift."

Let us break this down with a mashal from Rav Yosef Elefant shlit"a: A mother-in-law is coming to her children for a visit. She knocks on the front door – but the home is not all that tidy, and no one is in a hurry to let her in just yet. Well, that won't stop her; she can come in on her own if she wishes, as she knows the combination. Now, although she can technically walk right in on her own – how will she feel if she enters without being welcomed in? Her excitement of seeing her children will probably be somewhat minimized if she has to let herself in.

Now, our pasuk says that the King is coming, and the gates shall be lifted in His honor. Here lies the choice: we can either ignore the call to open up, or we can choose to lift the gate ourselves. Let us look at the results. In the first pasuk, when it says, "ve'hinasu" (and it will be lifted), the very next phrase tells us which type of King is entering the door. *ויבוא מלך הכבוד* – So that the King of Glory may enter. *מי זה מלך הכבוד* – Who is this King of Glory? *ה' עזוז וגבור* – Hashem the mighty and strong, Hashem the strong in battle.

However, in the second pasuk, when it says, "use'u" (and you will lift), the very next phrase tells us *מי זה מלך הכבוד* – Who is this King of Glory? *ה' צבאות הוא מלך הכבוד סלה* – Hashem, Master of the Legions, He is the King of Glory.

If we refuse to open ourselves up to Hashem's presence in our lives, the result is that He will come anyway, but as a King of war. However, by opening up and welcoming the King into our lives, His relationship with us is on a completely different level. It is one of honor and respect, a "feeling" of being welcome.

Coming back to the question that we must ask ourselves: In this new year, *הבא עלינו לטובה*, how are we going to welcome in the King? Hashem wants to have a relationship with us – and He will surely bring that desire to fruition, in one way or another. It is up to us to decide which version of the King we shall see, and that will be dictated by the welcoming that He receives.

מרדכי אפפלי, Good Shabbos,