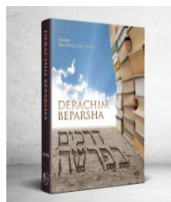


דרכים בפרשה בהעלותך

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יעש כן אהרן אל מול פני המנורה העלה נרתייה כאשר צוה ה' את משה

"Aharon did so; towards the face of the Menorah he lit its lamps, just as Hashem commanded Moshe."

The parsha opens with Hashem instructing Moshe to tell Aharon Hakohen to light the Menorah in the Mishkan. Immediately afterward, the Torah tells us that Aharon indeed did so.

Rashi famously comments: להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שנה *"This comes to tell us the praise of Aharon — that he did not deviate."*

The obvious question is: What exactly is the praise? Had Aharon ignored Hashem's instructions, that certainly would have been noteworthy. But why does the Torah find it necessary to emphasize that Aharon did exactly what he was told to do?

The most famous answer is that of the Sfas Emes. He explains that the praise was not simply that Aharon fulfilled the mitzvah. That was expected. Rather, the Torah is praising the manner in which he performed it. The enthusiasm, devotion and love that Aharon brought to the mitzvah never diminished. Every time he lit the Menorah, it was as if it were his first time. The mitzvah never became routine. It never became mechanical. The excitement remained unchanged.

If we think back to the first time we put on tefillin, the excitement was incredible. Are we still putting on tefillin with the same feelings that we had the very first time?

The Chasam Sofer offers another explanation. Certain avodos in the Mishkan could only be performed by the Kohen Gadol. Others could be performed by any kohen, and some, such as shechitah, could even be performed by a Yisroel.

The lighting of the Menorah did not require the Kohen Gadol and could have been performed by someone else. Although Aharon was instructed how the mitzvah was to be done, he was not obligated to be the one to perform it. He could have easily delegated the task to another kohen. Yet the Torah tells us, ויעש כן אהרן. Aharon himself performed the mitzvah.

Let us appreciate why this was so remarkable. This was the day that Aharon's two eldest sons, Nadav and Avihu, died. The grief that Aharon experienced is beyond our ability to comprehend. Under such circumstances, most people would have understood had he stepped aside and allowed someone else to perform the avodah, especially considering that he was not personally required to do so. But Aharon did not even consider that option. ויעש כן. He himself performed the mitzvah. He did not deviate and he did not delegate, despite the most difficult circumstances.

Combining these two explanations, we emerge with a remarkable picture of Aharon Hakohen. Not only did he refuse to pass the mitzvah on to someone else, but he performed it with the same enthusiasm and devotion as if nothing was amiss. He did not merely light the Menorah because it needed to be done, to be *yoitze zain*. And this is how he always performed the mitzvah, always with the same excitement and care that he had from the very beginning.

From Aharon we learn that a person is capable of far more than he may think. Challenges, setbacks and personal pain do not exempt a person from his responsibilities. A person can continue to be there for his family, his friends and his community. Most importantly, he can continue to fulfill the responsibilities that Hashem has entrusted to him.

Perhaps we can further explain this is the deeper meaning of שלא שנה. Aharon did not allow either time or circumstance to affect his avodas Hashem. The passage of years did not diminish his enthusiasm for the mitzvah, and personal tragedy did not diminish his commitment to it. Whether things were going well or whether life had become difficult, ויעש כן אהרן. Aharon served Hashem with the same dedication as always.

The mitzvah that Aharon was performing was the lighting of the Menorah. Its purpose was to bring light. Possibly the Torah is teaching us that even when a person's own world becomes dark, he still has the ability to bring light. That was the greatness of Aharon Hakohen. Despite the tragedy that he experienced, he continued to light the Menorah with the same dedication and enthusiasm as before. Even in the darkest of moments, a person has the ability to rise above his circumstances and continue serving Hashem.

מרדכי אפפאל, Good Shabbos