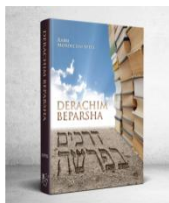


דרכים בפרשה שלח

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והאנשים אשר עלו עמו אמרו לא נוכל לעלות אל העם כי חזק הוא ממנו *But the men who went up with him said: "We are not able to go up against the nation, for they are more powerful than we."*

Chazal tell us that when the meraglim said **כי חזק הוא ממנו**, they meant, **כביכול**, "even the Baal HaBayis cannot remove His own utensils from the house." This is a very striking statement. The meraglim were not ordinary people. Chazal describe them as leaders of Klal Yisrael, great men. So how could they say something like this?

The Netziv (Meromei Sadeh) explains that the meraglim did not, **חס ושלום**, think that the Canaanim were stronger than Hashem. Rather, they felt that Klal Yisrael was not on the level to deserve open miracles to conquer Eretz Yisrael.

Maybe it went like this. They entered the land and saw the big cities, the fruit, and the giants. With each thing they saw, they became more intimidated. Slowly, they started to view Eretz Yisrael more through nature and less through Hashem's promise.

At first it was, "the cities are fortified." Then, "the people are strong." Then, "we cannot conquer them." Once they reached that point, Hashem was effectively removed from the picture. Chazal therefore describe their words as saying that even the Baal HaBayis cannot remove His own utensils from the house. Not because they thought Hashem couldn't, but because they were now viewing everything through nature.

Perhaps we can add another idea. The Chovos HaLevavos says that when a person puts his trust in something other than Hashem, Hashem removes His hashgacha and leaves him with what he is relying on.

Maybe that was their fear. They saw the strength of the Canaanim and started thinking in terms of nature and military power. Once they did that, they felt the special hashgacha needed to win would no longer be there. Klal Yisrael would be left to deal with the Canaanim through normal means. Against a nation like that, there was no way forward.

So according to this, when they said "even the Baal HaBayis cannot remove His own utensils," it was not, **chas v'shalom**, denying Hashem's power. It meant they felt the hashgacha needed for victory would no longer be there. If Klal Yisrael would rely on themselves instead of bitachon in Hashem, they would be left on their own.

Possibly there is another point in the Netziv. The meraglim didn't only underestimate Hashem's promise,

they also failed to appreciate Klal Yisrael. They looked at the nation and felt they were no longer on that level to deserve the miracles needed to enter the land. They missed that Klal Yisrael has a special relationship with Hashem. Hashem promised them Eretz Yisrael, and no city, giant, or army can stand in the way of that.

Sometimes we do the same thing. We look at ourselves and think we can't accomplish big things. We focus on what we're missing and forget who we are. The meraglim saw giants and forgot they were children of Hashem.

There is another deeper way to understand this, based on the seforim hakedoshim.

When Chazal say that "even the Baal HaBayis cannot remove His own utensils," it doesn't mean, **חס ושלום**, that Hashem can't do it. Of course He can.

Rather, **kaviyachol**, Hashem chose to be Baal HaBayis over His world. He set the "rules of the house," meaning the world runs through nature. And the **tachlis** of creation is **dira betachtonim**, that His presence should be **בתוך הטבע** itself.

This adds a deeper layer. Once the meraglim started viewing everything through nature, they did not just see difficulty. They saw a closed system. If the Baal HaBayis runs the world through nature, then within that system there is no way to overcome the Canaanim. So when they saw that Eretz Yisrael would be a life **בתוך הטבע**, as opposed to the midbar of revealed nissim, they concluded there is no way forward.

But that is exactly the mistake. "Baal HaBayis" does not mean bound by the house, it means He defines it. The same One who set nature as the system can override it at will, and is fully present **בתוך הטבע** itself. Nothing ever leaves His hashgacha, even when it looks like **טבע**.

This also explains their preference for the midbar, as above. In the midbar, the "rules of the house" were openly suspended, and nissim were revealed. In Eretz Yisrael, the Baal HaBayis remains the same, but His presence is **בתוך הטבע**, not above it. They mistook hidden for absent, and saw entering Eretz Yisrael as a descent instead of the next stage.

And that is why they resisted entering the land. Not because Eretz Yisrael is less, but because they failed to appreciate what it means for Hashem to be Baal HaBayis, and how His hashgacha continues even when it is hidden.

So the mistake of the meraglim was not a lack of belief in Hashem's ability, but a misunderstanding of Baal HaBayis, forgetting that the same One who set the rules of the house is never limited by them, and Klal Yisrael are always completely **ביד**.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפעי