

דרכים בפרשה נצבים-וילך

R' Mordechai Appel, an
alumnus of the Telzer
Yeshiva, is the author of
Derachim Beparsha.



אתם נצבים היום כלכם

If you happen upon a bird's nest on the road

Moshe Rabbeinu gathers Klal Yisroel before entering into the bris with Hashem, and the Torah seems almost unnecessarily concerned with making sure we know exactly who is standing there: **ראשיכם שבטיכם זקניכם** ושוטריכם כל איש ישראל מחוטב עץ עד שואב מימך חוטב עצים. שואב מים. Why does the Torah emphasize **כלכם**? If everyone was there, we already know that everyone was there. Why does the Torah need to define the ציבור by listing people who seem to have so little in common?

The Seforim Hakedoshim explain that **כלכם** is not simply a head count. We tend to look at people according to levels. There is a ראש and there is a רגל. There are people who are spiritually accomplished and people who are struggling, people who have what to teach and people who seem to have what to learn. But Klal Yisroel doesn't work that way. The head cannot say that the foot is merely there to carry it around. The head needs the foot. In fact, the Seforim Hakedoshim explain that there is something about the head's own completeness that can come only through the foot. The person who appears to be on a lower level possesses something that the person on the higher level does not have.

That changes the meaning of **כלכם**. It isn't simply that everybody is included. It is that everybody is necessary. We naturally measure people according to what we recognize as valuable. We understand the great talmid chacham, the brilliant mind, the person who accomplishes something extraordinary. But there are other contributions that we may not even recognize because they aren't our particular strengths. The person who seems to have less may possess something that I desperately need.

I once shared a story about the Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev zt"l at my Shabbos table. It was one of those stories about the Berditchever finding a way to see the

good in a Yid even when, to everybody else, there wasn't much good to see. One of the guests (a great Rosh Yeshiva) found the story hilarious. He wasn't mocking the Berditchever, but he couldn't resist asking, "How does this compare to learning a Ketzos Hachoshen?"

Of course, it doesn't. **אין לנו שיעור רק התורה הזאת. There is nothing in the world comparable to Torah.** A Ketzos Hachoshen is a Ketzos Hachoshen, and we should be very careful not to turn every beautiful middah into a competition with Torah. But perhaps his question revealed something about how we measure greatness. We tend to value what we understand. We recognize the person who can learn a difficult sugya, the person with tremendous knowledge or the person who can accomplish great things. But sometimes we fail to recognize the importance of something simply because it isn't the particular thing we know how to measure.

The greatness of the Berditchever was that he could see what others couldn't see. He could look at a Yid and find something that was invisible to everyone else. And perhaps that is exactly the perspective the Torah is giving us with **אתם נצבים היום כלכם**. The Seforim Hakedoshim compare Klal Yisroel to a body, with a ראש and a רגל. The head is certainly the head, and the foot is certainly the foot, but the head cannot walk without the foot. More than that, there is something the foot contributes that the head itself does not possess. Every part has its own purpose, and the body is only complete when all of its parts are together.

This is also why the Torah specifically includes **מחוטב עץ עד שואב מימך**. Even the person who seems to be at the bottom has a place that nobody else can fill. His contribution is not despite his position. It comes precisely from where he stands. Sometimes the person we are most likely to overlook is carrying the very thing that makes the whole body complete.

The Seforim Hakedoshim take this idea even further with **מתנות לאביונים**, which is described as **איש לרעהו**, a mutual giving. We usually think of a giver and a recipient. The giver has something, the recipient needs something, and the recipient says thank you. Everyone knows the script. But perhaps the script isn't quite that simple. The person who needs something from me may be carrying something that I need. The person who

appears to be giving less may actually be giving something that I could never give myself.

Perhaps this is what the *Hayliger Berditchever* understood so deeply. When he stood before Hashem on Rosh Hashana, he didn't come only with his own zechuyos. He came carrying Klal Yisroel with him. He searched for the נקודה טובה in every Yid and turned it into a defense before the כסא דין. He understood that there is a strength that an individual can never produce by himself: the strength of the ציבור.

Perhaps that is one of the greatest zechuyos a person can have going into Rosh Hashana. I am not coming alone. I am coming as part of כלכם. The Yid who knows more than me has something I need, and the Yid who knows less than me has something I need. The Yid who seems to be giving to me may actually be giving me something I desperately need. We are not a collection of individuals who happen to daven in the same shul, all trying to find parking at approximately the same time. We are a body, and every part of that body makes the others complete.

The Torah does not stop with כלכם. It continues: לעבור בברית ה' אלקיך. The Seforim Hakedoshim explain that the כולכם is the preparation for the ברית. A bris is a bond that exists beyond calculations, beyond logic and beyond what each side has earned. The connection between Yidden creates the preparation for that deeper connection with Hashem. Before we stand before Hashem as individuals on Rosh Hashana, we first stand as כלכם, as one ציבור.

And perhaps that is what Nitzavim is reminding us as Rosh Hashana approaches. We certainly need our own zechuyos. We need our own teshuva and our own avodah. But we also need to remember that we are not standing there alone. We are standing together with Yidden whose strengths are different from ours, whose struggles are different from ours and whose very presence completes something in us that we could never complete on our own. Perhaps one of the greatest zechuyos we can bring with us into Rosh Hashana is not that we have managed to become perfect. It is that we belong to כלכם.

The Shem Meshmuel writes: הנה שבת זו האחרונה שבשנה ויש לתקן בה מה שהחסיר בכל שבתות השנה דביקות ועונג שבת. וכאשר שבת זו בעונג ודביקות כדת מתקן בה כל שבתות השנה כל האורות מכל שבתות השנה כולם נקבצו ובאו בשבת זו. This Shabbos is the last Shabbos of the year, and it has the capacity to redeem all the Shabbosos of the year that were not kept with the full devotion and deveikus they should have had. All the holiness and spiritual light of all the previous Shabbosos gather in this Shabbos, so they can be rectified on this Shabbos. In general, every Shabbos can rectify the six days of the week. So in essence, the Shabbos before Rosh Hashana is mesaken the entire year. Since each Shabbos encompasses the six days after it, and this Shabbos encompasses all those Shabbosos, if this one Shabbos is kept properly, it rectifies and transforms the entire year.

**Good Shabbos and a kesiva vachasima
tova, מרדכי אפפערל**