

BS"D Parashat Shlach 5784

We Need Each Other

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchaki) opens his commentary on Parashat Shlach with the question:

Why does this parasha with its initial subject of the Meraglim (scouts) appear adjoining the punishment of Miryam for criticizing her brother Moshe at the end of last week's Parashat Be'ha'alotcha?

And Rashi explains that there is a fundamental connection between them. The meraglim saw the terrible punishment that befell Miryam for speaking critically about her brother Moshe, but they did not internalize the seriousness of the sin, and they went on to criticize the holy land of Eretz Yisrael.

In all humility, I would add another reason why these two parshiot are adjoining. In Be'ha'alotcha Moshe early on in the second year of his leadership sought to find solace and comfort from HaShem for all the grief he was enduring from the rebellious conduct of the newly freed slaves. Moshe had no one else to turn to except the Omnipotent Creator, as brought in Bamidbar 11:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-יְהוָה כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת-קוֹל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאָמְרוּ אֵלֵינוּ אֲנִי וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

He (Moshe) asked HaShem, “why have You brought this suffering on your servant? What have I done to displease You that you put the burden of all these people on me?

Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land You promised on oath to their ancestors?”

Their anger and raging behavior and their incessant bickering over every issue caused Moshe such intense suffering that he begged HaShem to take him from this life, rather than to remain as their leader.

In parashat Shlach we find the reverse. Hashem seeks solace from Moshe for the nation’s rebellious behavior and refusal to trust HaShem’s promise that He would care for them. Bamidbar 14:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וְלָאֱלֹהִים כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאָמְרוּ לָאֱלֹהִים לָמָּה עָשִׂיתָ עִיִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
לְבָרְכֵם וְלָאֵמֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה לָאֱלֹהִים
לְעֵינֵינוּ וְלָאֵמֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה לְעֵינֵינוּ

HaShem said to Moshe, “how long will these people treat Me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in Me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?”

HaShem, the Omnipotent Creator, and the human being called Moshe both “need” each other’s encouragement and support, just as a father and son support each other to overcome the difficulties they encounter .

So, without going into the glaring difficulties which abound here, the simple question is: if indeed we are so difficult, why does HaShem continue to choose us as His sole eternal

nation?

Throughout our history, whenever we drew away from the Torah, HaShem would intervene with major punishments: exile of the ten tribes, destruction of the first and second Temples, 2000-year exile, and the unspeakable Shoah. So, what is the powerful attraction that enjoins the Creator and His humble Jewish nation of human beings to remain in a marriage where the couple does not live in harmony, yet neither side has the initiative to divorce?

This is a timely question, for at this juncture in our history the Jews in the Medina as well as those yet in galut are in jeopardy. So, what will be?

I submit:

HaShem cannot abandon the Jewish nation because He would then be left alone with a world of goyim, devoid of kedusha, tahara, mitzvot, and a long history of devotion to Him.

And Am Yisrael cannot walk away from HaShem, as I quoted several weeks ago from a letter my father ZT"l received during the Second World War from his nephew whose unit in the Jewish Brigade of the British Army liberated a concentration camp.

He describes in his letter that his uniform bore the Star of David. Upon entering the camp, an emaciated, sick Jewish prisoner approached him. He did not ask for food or drink. He asked for a siddur! To my cousin's question as to why he would want a siddur after enduring this agony for being a Jew? The man replied, "we have a difficult God, but I cannot live without God."

Granted, there are, and always were, difficult groups of people within us; but the hardcore Torah-true Jews will never forsake the millions and millions of Jews who came before. From the time of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai through such time that we will have proven ourselves worthy of the

honor of being the chosen nation, we remain steadfastly Am Israel.

Yirmiyahu 30,7:

יְהוָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ יְהוָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ
יְהוָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ יְהוָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ

*And it will be a time of difficulty for Ya'akov
but he will be saved.*

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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